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ANONYMOUS SECURE NOTE
MEDIA STATES — THE — OF AMERICA

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SERIES
2012

Michril Shamburg
Secretary of the Treasury

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THANX FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Cyborganix Now!
Applied Memetics
Info Econ 101
Gizmos, Widgets, etc.

Michril Shamburg

of the Treasury

+

fringeoids * contents

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d r o p ⟶ i n s

"An indigenous electronic morphology is the 'rap.' Rapping is a meandering interplay which renders nothing irrelevant and maximizes feedback options. It's also a self-defining word… But generally, rapping is the antithesis of a developmental structure. You can come in anywhere, leave anywhere, and still come away with something. Significantly, two men whose literary style parallels rapping, Marshall McLuhan and Buckminster Fuller, are given no legitimacy in university curricula."

    —**Michael Shamberg, Guerrilla Television**, *1971*

"We can see that the early apostles of industrialism had to confront the still-rudimentary progress of the civilizing process as it bore upon work behavior. The spontaneous, instinctually gratifying behavior of the new industrial worker had to be suppressed, and that energy channeled into the controlled behavior demanded by the intensification of production. The factory became a pedagogic institution where the new standards of conduct and sensibility, general referred to as 'labor discipline,' would be learned. The exhaustive measure that employers took to thwart the animal body are a sign of its very intractability… The notion of labor discipline signaled a very concrete problem: how to get the human body to remain in one place, pay attention, and perform consistently over a fixed period of time."

    —**Shoshana Zuboff, In The Age Of The Smart Machine**, *1988*

"In 1964, when William Burroughs wrote in Nova Express about the Subliminal Kid, who 'brought back street sound and talk and music and poured it into his recorder array so he set waves and eddies and tornadoes of sound down all you streets and by the river of all language — Word dust drifted streets of broken music car horns and air hammers — The Word broken pounded exploded in smoke…' he could have been hearing pre-echoes of Public Enemy's Fear of a Black Planet, Ice Cube's AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted, even the Anthrax/Chuck D thrash metal version of 'Bring The Noise'."

    —**David Toop, Rap Attack 2**, *1991*

"Lo and behold, I'm still the topic of the moment. I guess that means I'll be selling lots of records! Seems that quite a few folks have come to my defense, and I have to tell you, I'm grateful. But, as always, I go on, regardless. Doesn't that just piss you off? — billy idol"

    —**idol@well.sf.ca.us (William Broad) on alt.cyberpunk**, *1993*

"Part artistic terrorists, part vernacular critics, culture jammers, like Eco's 'communications guerrillas', introduce noise into the signal as it passes from transmitter to receiver, encouraging idiosyncratic, unintended interpretations. Intruding on the intruders, they invest ads, newscast and other media artifacts with subversive meanings. Simultaneously, they decrypt them, rendering their seductions impotent."

    —**Mark Dery, "The Empire Of Signs", Adbusters #2.4**, *1993*

"While sampling had other uses, it's young black kids, stigmatized by violence, who are flying past the technocrats who used to claim that 'those who conquer technology shall be the master race'… Who will pay attention to these 'masters' of post-modernism?"

    —**Rickey Vincent, Mondo 2000 #2**, *1990*

"So to all the stuck pigs, whining crybabies, and academics accustomed to a lifestyle sponsored by federal subsidy… get a grip. The thing that grates me most is this holy glorification of the Net as some vital educational tool that will save us from America's downward slide into ignorance, decadence, and decay."

    —**bladex@wixer.bga.com (David Smith), Scream Baby - The Hum Drum Issue**, *1993*

"The future is going to be much more like the extremely distant past. It's not that technology is going to disappear. It's that technology is going to be much less obtrusive."

    —**Terence McKenna, Mondo 2000 #10**, *1993*

"Will the monkey on your back offer you a banana?" —**Rob Brezsny, "Real Astrology", 16 Jul 93**

Yow!

Walked into *Cody's*, Berkeley's own 'zine central, got spotted by Tommy who said: "Here take a look at this you might like it." I thought "Oh no another techno-hippie won't-the-future-be-cool hack job." He was right, I was wrong. You got it, keep it up and get that next issue out! While your at it sub me to your list. BTW I'm the moderator for the *Freedom Privacy and Technology* conference on Planet BMUG so if ya got anything to throw my way do so.

PS: Seeing Paco's name is what got me to take a closer look. Now that I've read this from cover to cover I'm getting my shopping list together.

- Gilles Poltras, gilles@well.sf.ca.us

Am enjoying your publication, and subscribed to cypherpunks e-mail. Although I always distrust my instincts (fools rushing in, and all that.) Your pub strikes a very sympathetic chord in me.

- Robert L. Foster,
RLFOSTER@utxvm.cc.utexas.edu

The guy at the register noticed I was buying *FWR* and the new *2600* and commented about how both zines seem to be moving well. Only one copy of *FWR* was left on the shelves. This may be due to the fact that *FWR* is getting some good word-of-mouth press (the best kind) from the local Houston underground BBS scene.

A couple of random notes after perusing this wonderful premiere issue: I noticed that the spokesmodel wasn't allowed to show off the sexy *2600* undergarments. Good move, Jonl. With the kind of readership *FWR* might draw, it's best to play it safe. One day, when you put together the FWI trivial pursuit card set here's a true stumper: *"Who is the mysterious 'Ed' who asks about Quarterman's maps on p. 23 of the otherwise perfectly conducted Jennings interview?"* And finally, was it just my issue or did all of them have four covers? Did I inadvertently stumble upon a collectable?

All in all, *FWR* was a pleasurable afternoon of nifty new edge. So when does this thing go monthly...? <look out *Wired*>

- Edward Cavazos, polekat@well.sf.ca.us

You've got a collectable — strange that a mysterious ref would fall on an ominous page...

I really like *FWR*, the best signal/noise ratio of any 'zine I've seen. Can't say enuf goof things about it!!! (oops, should say *good*.)

- Andrew Volk, avolk@Juliet.Caltech.Edu

*Andy: Ha! You caught us **goofing** off again!*

I picked up a copy of *FWR* today, and upon a premier skimming, and an attempt to begin in-depth analysis, I congratulate you. Kudos, the articles and topics seem to be first-rate, and I certainly think you fill a glaring void in the cyber 'zine scene. Anyway, just congrats and I shall spread the word that *FWR* is out and about.

- Jeffrey J. Radice, jjr@wixer.bga.com

luv the premier issue of *FWR*. please put me on the email list. thanks. and good luck.

- Sandra L. Huss, shuss@ua1ix.ua.edu

Having seen the first issue of *FWR*, I must say, congratulations. It's quite a nice piece of work. I particularly like that connection between the Leri/Kesey Magic bus and the modem schematics and protocol descriptions. (I didn't notice the modem schematics independently, I'm sorry to say — Scotto pointed them out to me.)

The cypherpunk/cryptoanarchy article was wonderful as well, but I feel I must point out a VERY DANGEROUS error in your PGP tutorial. The article described the user picking up FringeWare, Inc.'s public key and adding it to hir public key ring. The article showed the user answering "Yes" to the question of whether SHe wanted to certify the key as being absolutely positively FW's key. This is dangerous.

Key certification should only be done if the user knows with **utmost** certainty that the given key belongs to who it claims to belong to. In the example, the user picked up the key from an email message from FW. Because email messages can be so easily forged, it is possible that the key the user receives in email is not actually FW's key, but the key of a third party. Thus if the user wished to send secure communications to FW but uses the key of a third party in place of FW's actual key, there is no security as this third party will be able to read everything which is sent to FW, supposedly securely.

Please inform your readers of this problem and urge them to read the PGP documentation written by Phil Zimmerman, as he can describe the situation with a good deal more clarity than I can. It is very dangerous to use PGP incorrectly.

Peace,

- Sameer Parekh, zane@genesis.mcs.com

Knowing both of the parties involved in that example's key exchange, I assumed files would be correct, which ISN'T necessarily so... that's why PGP proponents call for "key exchanges" at public meetings... like even some of the SF raves, I believe... Thanx Sameer!

FWR is fucking *great*. It's within or overlapping the territory I one-day wanted to do (for years now) in a zine. But I'll never get around to it, especially now... I totally agree — FUCK THE "FUTURE" — what about today? re: Paco's *path-o-logical* rant. He/you talk around what I think is a central, defining difference — the way you relate to what is currently around you, in broad terms — Are we waiting around for a tomorrow that's always one day off, or living now, and today?

Since it wasn't referenced explicitly (it was of course a short rant, as rants go :-), I wonder if Paco &c have yet stumbled onto Hakim Bey's rants on im-mediate-ism? For years, the split between "real life" as manifested in the world I was living in *vs.* my internal desire for some critical thing left me searching for words to even define it. All I knew was the there was something wrong or incomplete in the goings on around me that was not so much intentionally dishonest as incomplete out of ignorance. I knew that "I did not want to choose amongst the choices presented me." Hence I became a big dropout. The missing thing was what Hakim Bey calls "immediatism", his solution to the capitalist, mainstream dream/nightmare many call consensus reality, that promises the (always one day off) future, in exchange for your "today".

The solution (not acceptable to many, alas) is to use your connectedness to everyday things, pleasures especially, as a sanity-check on what you're doing. In my case, it took completely dropping out of my fancy corporate/high-tech jobs, and giving up my decently-substantial income. I got lots in exchange, and 8 yrs later, no regrets, except that every time I hesitated at something, I should have moved faster. Almost every time it involved "letting go" some damn thing like a job, habits, ideas, etc. It's worth reading his essays on. They're short and concise, and convey the ideas in few pages (a very good sign :-)

Small criticism, in "Cruzin the Internet", last column, 1:12: "It does us no good to resent the mainstream. Rather we should welcome them with open arms..." Well, maybe into *your* living room, but not mine! I think it's a matter of degree, or similar construct — access in general, yes, open the fucking floodgates. As fast as possible, and as wide as possible. However that doesn't mean we have to like them. Don't forget we're building access for the pigs, wannabe pigs, would-be fascists, etc too, quite explicitly, plus plain old idiots *I* don't want anything to do with. There's no paradox involved. It does require building WALLS as well as ROADS. I flatly refuse to entertain idiots at my expense. We can all have all of this, as it's not physical terrain we're talking.

- Tom Jennings, tomj@wps.com

The first issue of *FWR* was about **Beginnings**, as many of y'all have parsed and commented. Judging from responses, that struck a resounding tone within emotional chords out in the Big Wide World... For starters, several of our closest friends hadn't thought Jon and I were **serious** about this enterprise, and of course even more people didn't know *who* we were or recognize *where* we'd come from; that's changed.

Our distributor got serious about *FWR* after actually seeing it printed, promptly placing the 'zine in international distribution. Each week they call with more stores placing orders. We owe these results to the wonderful people who've gone into bookstores asking for the zine — **Thanx!** At press time it appears the first issue will sell through completely. Here's part of our favor back to y'all: you've invested in us, we'll honor your investment... please hold on to those collector's copies *because we won't be doing reprints* (excepting indexed annuals, e.g. for libraries).

This issue of *FWR* concerns **Survival**: "After commencing a chosen path, how does one continue?" As a business we've confronted this fact of life just like everybody else <g>... Nearly a year after incorporation, FringeWare Inc. still exists, still grows and earns its keep while adhering to founding principles. As a nexus for a particular kind of community, we've felt a responsibility to report on *how* we were surviving, how others might accomplish similar endeavors. *What to hope for? What to look out for? What to appreciate?* Hence, this issue's focus.

In this issue's centerpiece essay/tutorial "Applied Memetics", free agent .rez envisions a scenario where large firms approach FWI as a center for understanding new forms of business emergent around the Net. Rez had no idea several such inquiries were in progress; he deconstructed business plan, foretelling our near future *from email observations and memetic analysis alone*... Thanx rez! The meme has a consistency about it, has seemed to gain an evolutionary foothold... in some niche within the soup.

Speaking of *evolution*, you may notice changes on the masthead. Our progress owes to efforts from a talented, enthusiastic group of people we recruited to sail with us for Issue #1, most of whom have since climbed aboard eager for the entire regatta. Monte McCarter as *Art Director*, Tiffany Lee Brown as *Assistant Editor*, Don Webb and Scotto as *Contributing Editors*, and Nimrod S. Kerrett and Daniel Molnar as *Correspondents*. These days I judge the quality of my life, to a large extent, by the original and provoking artwork and writing which I'm privy to receive at this end of my telephone/modem wire. *This is what I hoped for; now I hope it grows for all involved.*

In the 1991 essay "People, Where Economics Is Grounded" from *The End of Economic Man: Principles of Any Future Economics*, George Brockway summarizes: "As a consequence of the compulsion to maintain my existence, I must maintain yours; and on this requirement economics is grounded." For the record, FringeWare Inc. is not any big corporation, nor will it intend to become one. FWI represents a small enterprise run by Jon Lebkowsky and myself (a) to earn a living off the kinds of endeavors we enjoy, (b) to foment the kind of community and environment we find appealing, and (c) to help others earn a living within that community through endeavors they enjoy. Granola Farmers meet Virtual Reality on 42nd St.

We couldn't pursue this course without your **attention** and **participation**; in return we'll strive to offer a valuable resource in trade, by endeavoring to point out many potentials and foibles inherent within the *information economy* rising out of our *cyborganic reality*.

We are caught, as a global community, within a major transformation. Factors leading to development, over the past two centuries, of a (relatively) stable base of interlinked, industrial economies under the control of nation-states *no longer apply*. As a people, we've formulated an alternative and pursued it beyond even our own imaginations. Maybe that's just human nature, but the ensuing sea change to new modes of survival will not be easy.

In the 1990 text *Megatrends 2000*, leading futurist John Naisbitt and co-author Patricia Aburdene built upon the prescience/mythos of "information society" and "global economy" from their previous bestselling text *Megatrends* to proclaim that "During the 1990's well-educated, skilled information workers will earn the highest wages in history, further reinforcing the decade's affluence." Taking a quick look around, most of the people we know are buried up to their ears in debt, either in capital owed or in terms of the overwhelming amount of essence they must forsake to continue current lifestyles. At the same time, new forms of computer-media exchange have become entrenched within homes and workplaces which demand even more investment in skill, time and attention.

Somehow, Naisbitt's failed analysis demands a new formulation of the mythos for a post-industrial, information-based marketplace, something beyond the gleam projected by large commercial online services and Silicon Valley's lobbyists. We demand a new definition of what it means to survive, to thrive. To paraphrase Donna Haraway: *survival*, not *salvation*.

A common theme of response to *FWR* #1 has been people wishing, nearly lamenting: "Someday I'd like to be able to earn a living at the end of a data pipe." FringeWare exists to foster and embody that meme... So we called on talented writers and artists with experience in the matter, researched decades back and reached the following conclusions: *Naisbitt might just be right, but take care not to believe any person selling you the dream.* A sea of Information Economies exist, and principles supporting them appear exciting and potentially beneficial, but joining the flow of exchange as an individual requires a new kind of mental and emotional discipline, one that runs counter-intuitive to culture promulgated by mainstream media. *Here is our case for survival.* Hope you enjoy it. What next?
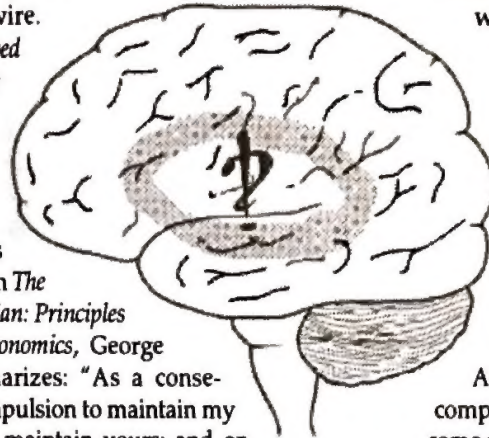
We demand a new definition of what it means to survive, to thrive.

Rob
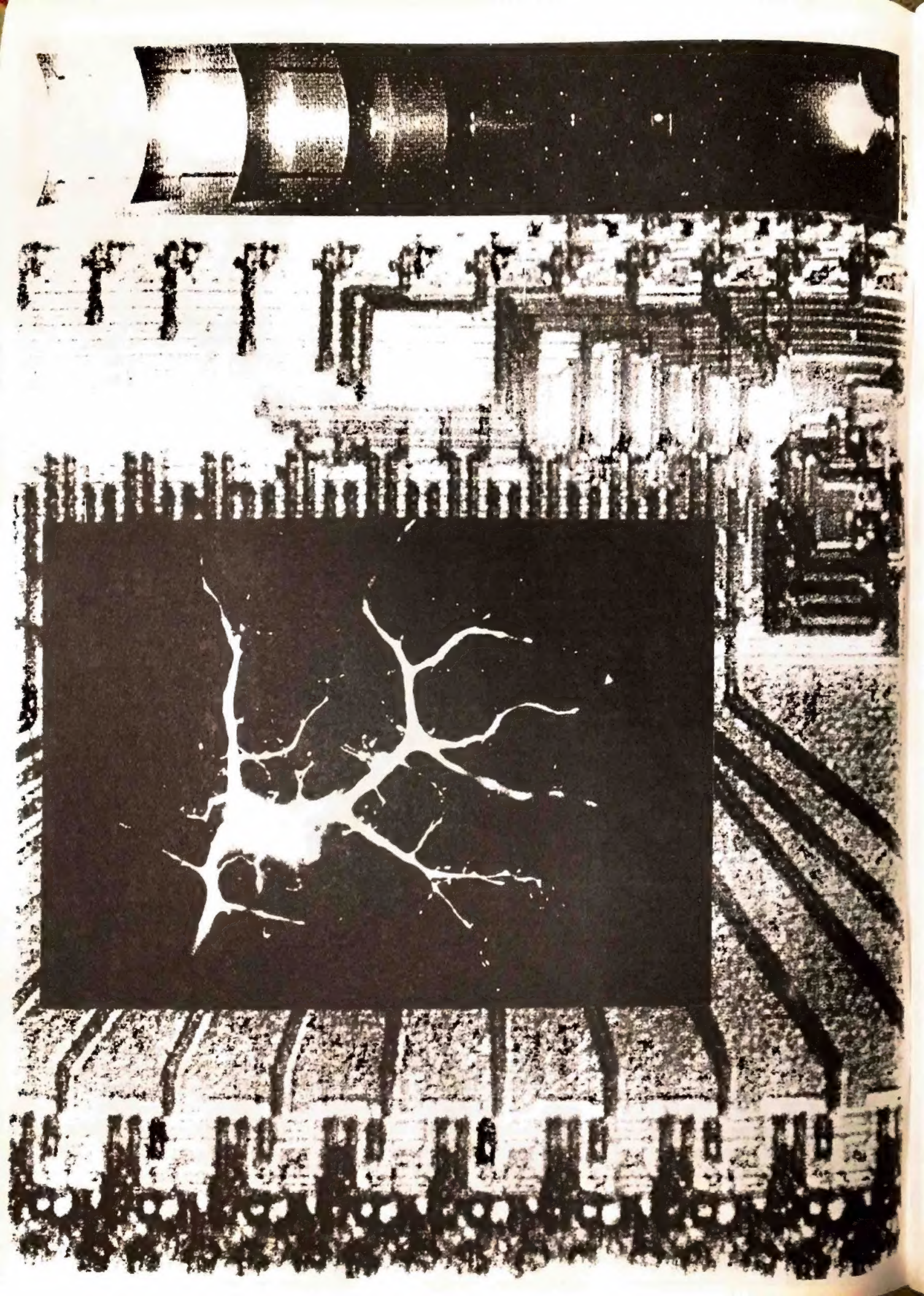
cyborganix now!

..by Jon Lebkowsky, jonl@wixer.bga.com

1993 — *seemingly an uneventful year.* Bill Clinton relives Jimmy Carter's nightmare in the hellish twilight-zone border that separates the Beltway from the chaos of "mainstream" America. Serial killers stalk the malls and crack-crazed gangstas make sport with drive-by shootings and brutal carjackings. Murderers of small children are paroled from overcrowded prisons. As great nations dismantle their nukes, parts are sold on grey markets to ambitious terrorists with dystopian outlooks (they've been watching American TV). *Burt divorces Loni.*

The usual circus, the usual crowd. Buried in the headlines, though, is a science note: an asteroid passed within 90,000 miles of earth, even as the dinosaur revival filled theatres and department stores across the civilized world.

90,000 miles — wow. In an infinite universe, 90,000 miles is less than a whisper. A slight orbital variation, and this slab of rock would have struck the earth, a cataclysmic event beyond my meager imagination… but, according to reports, we didn't even see it coming.

So the word is that we're not really paying attention. We're not paying **attention** to distant macrothreats that could wipe gobs of life off the slate in mere seconds, and we're damn sure not paying enough **attention** to microthreats like disease, starvation, cruelty…

Denial is pervasive, sleep is pervasive, everybody's shopping but nobody's minding the store. If (to paraphrase *Schwa*) you want to

STAY AWAKE!

you gotta face the somnambulist spirits that have filled the streets and alleys and video voids that comprise our devolving existence.

Don't get me wrong, we're not depressed about this. We're *PISSED OFF!* We're not diggin' the destiny, we're looking for something better, hoping to find it somewhere in diversity, kindness, creativity, and giggling foolishness.

CYBERPUNK, BEWARE!

If you're into the dystopian cyberpunk vision of a virtual future, think twice: *you just might get what you were looking for.* We're looking for something different, a *cyborganic*, neotribal, sustainable communitarian future which de-emphasizes established monolithic corporate and governmental power structures in favor of distributed communities linked by common interests that are fairly basic, that don't require sufficient centralization for power to be abusive. On the other hand, we still wanna form the kinds of alliances necessary to pelt those asteroids before they strike…

So, if we're gonna put this future together, what do we do about the powerful bureaucratic and corporatist forces that stand to lose their powerful economic and psychic grip on our *cojones*?

Nothing. Not a damn thing.

History seems to tell us that when revolutionary zealots oppose existing power structures and win, they become sick with the same kind of power, so that only the players change. The game itself remains.

So if you really want change, you have to evolve it from within your own life, your own space. In the '60s we knew some radicals who had this realization… they formed a movement that they called *Direct Action*: if you don't like the way society works, take direct action to change your own life, rather than trying to change somebody else's. And ya know, they found a lot that needed to be changed in their own backyards.

> ## Denial is pervasive, sleep is pervasive, everybody's shopping but nobody's minding the store.

You can't force *love* or *compassion* or sane *sustainability* into being by shoving 'em down anyone's throat but your own.

CYBORGANIX

While supposéd power brokers of the world stew in their various juices, while Clintons and Yeltsins and Saddam Husseins strut their stuff, while corporate and mafia organoxiousness proliferates commercial media manipulation and video shepherding of the reflex-prone masses, we will work quietly on alternatives to *entropic culture*.

Our work is generated, not from the "cyberpunk" meme with which many of us are associated, but from a cyborganic version of a future in which technology is appropriate to life enhancement. Dystopian visions have their place as fair warnings of what might be, but our vision is *extropian*. And we're not necessarily talking implants of machine in flesh, but an enhancement of technology so that it is ubiquitous and life-affirming, and an evolution beyond the *industrial* model to a neotribal cyborganic technopagan future. And if this seems descriptive of a Fringe element, we're content to stay on the Fringes and let the rest of society evolve as it will. Our experiment aligns with evolution, not revolution.

We've been reading a story called "Forgetfulness", written around 1940 during the "golden age" of science fiction, by John W. Campbell under his *nom de plume*, Don A. Stuart. Campbell's influence on the genre was transcendent: his high standards for the essentials of fiction (plot and character development, style) and for fact-based hard science elements in each story pushed SF beyond technohack writing to a literary evolution that has since swallowed the postmodern postindustrial postnational cultural moods whole and produced, among others, the cyberpunk SF that we all know… Gibson, Maddox, Rucker, et al. Campbell, then, generated a literary movement that was ancestor to the cyberactive cultures evolving in the information era, so his importance can't be understated.

In "Forgetfulness", visitors from space explore a distant-future Earth (Rhth) and find that its residents have abandoned their accelerated high-tech cities to live in quaint domes surrounded by flowers. They seem to have abandoned technology altogether. The explorers figure they've stumbled onto a *devolved* civilization, but the punch line is that the rhthlings have evolved beyond technology, which is just a stepping stone toward mastery.

The concept of cyborganics points in a similar direction, i.e. beyond heavier applications of technology to a lighter, leaner approach that's appropriate to where we are now… not thinking of this as a step forward or backward, by the way, but as deepening of our understanding of our place in the context of the world, the universe and (especially) our own artifacts. In this context technology becomes ubiquitous, transparent, less *egophallic*.

Speaking of which, gender has new meaning where technology supports a synthesis of roles so that we have no special feathers and no gender dominance. Male and female will al-

Donna J. Haraway

My first exposure to the word cyborg was in 1959, when I bought a comic entitled something like Cyborg 1999 AD. Already well acquainted with the concepts of robot and android, and their mythic precursor in the tale of the Golem, I could see right away that cyborg was different: not a machine constructed to be, in some or in all ways, mimetic of humans, but a human enhanced by its intimate interface with the technology. The cyborg science fiction tales I encountered thereafter always described implants, intrusive technologies. The Six Million Dollar Man and Robocop are cyborgs of this kind, as are the altered humans in cyberpunk fiction.

One of my early meetings with Paco X was in the context of an interview wherein he was describing how the software he and his ex-wife Suzanne developed, Menstat, would work as a technology for mapping human biorhythms, in this case to facilitate fertility planning using neural net technology to track menstrual cycles. We talked about other possible applications, such as software tracking a diabetic's blood sugar

levels, and functional expansion to use wearable computers and medical hardware for measuring somatic signals (such as digital thermometers). Smart biofeedback. We even envisioned Mortstat, a software application for predicting the approximate moment of death!

Most important, though, was our shared insight that cyborgs are not necessarily the stuff of science fiction: wherever the somatic or mental (i.e. human) function is enhanced by cybernetic technologies, you have cyborgs.

We would have been onto this sooner had we read Donna Haraway. In "The Cyborg Manifesto" Haraway, a biologist whose work with primates has led to an exploration of the social construction of meaning, explores from a feminist perspective the coevolution of organic and technological components of human systems, and the impact of resulting new cultural and political formulations on such concepts as race, gender, and identity. Her work is critical of the perpetuation of Western traditional modes of thought and identity and, more important, reproaches radical criticism that

challenges practices within Western culture without challenging its fundamental assumptions. One such example is the Genesis myth which posits a loss of (and implicit possibility of return to) innocence.

Having merely read Haraway's difficult manifesto without follow-up study and consideration, I can't pretend expertise, but you get the drift. We recommend that FWR readers explore Haraway's thinking, including "The Cyborg Manifesto", in Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature, Routledge 1991, ISBN 0-415-90387-4. We invite articles on Haraway's work for future publication in FWR.

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ways have biophysical meaning, but the window-dressing of *gender stereotypes* is no longer necessary. The characteristics of men, women, and synthesized relationships take on an ad hoc quality, emerging from immediate context rather than from bogus tradition.

LESSONS OF GIANT LIZARDS

"Forgetfulness" still reflects the anthropocentric sickness which would envision a "conquest" of the "material" universe by human consciousness; the *cyborganic meme*, however, posits an evolution away from conquest, an acknowledgment of the human's origin in the animal, and the animal's origin in stardust... all one, all interconnected, all interdependent. This is a blow to the ego where ego is a sense of alienation from dirt, trees, dawgs, and water, per *Gojiro* a kind of "speciesism" and worse, a sense of superiority over both "organic" and "inorganic" realities.

The cyborg no longer accepts the authority in the sense of a unified ego-structure, recognizing instead that any organism is produced from a multiplicity of codes and that ego is an oper-

ating system without superior valence. Somewhat like the Buddhist perspective in which thoughts are acknowledged, but not accorded particular weight: only the here and now of existence has any real substance.

Not to say that cyborgs are mere machines or sets of instructions... The point is they are not. Cyborgs comprise more than the sum of their parts, which can be either physical or informational. But it is essential to acknowledge the parameters of the various parts to understand the parameters that limit the whole. Again in the Buddhist tradition, it's important to acknowledge that each part interdepends not just with parts of the single organism, but with parts of all organisms *and* inorganic pieces of the universe as well. In the sense of mystical, spiritual, even newage philosophical approaches without associated superstitious or fantastic elements, we are all one, and at the same time we are all syntheses of a multiplicity of codes.

If we don't begin to acknowledge what is both intuitively and scientifically established, which contradicts our usual ego-dominant way of doing business with blinders on, charging ahead without reference to context, it won't really matter. Our failure to learn to tread water will not prevent the inevitable flood, y'might say.

BUDDHIST ECONOMICS

I posted the following short article to the FringeWare email list:

One precursor to the FW meme is E.F. Schumacher's short article "Buddhist Economics", which can be found in a collection of his essays entitled Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered.

Consider the lawnmower's evolution from a labor-intensive push-tool to a boisterous monoxide-spewing engine of overkill...

This essay reached me in 1975. I had rejected materialism, dropped out of college, found work as a caseworker in the Food Stamp program, and started raising a family. We were active members of a food co-op, and we had been reading Ernest Callenbach's Living Poor with Style. We were into voluntary simplicity, what's now called sustainability. It didn't last.

Needless to say, we've all been through some shit since then, including the threat of co-option by an extremely powerful worldwide system of commerce.

a system that has not been altogether friendly to small-scale, creative entrepreneurial endeavors.

Direct opposition to this system doesn't seem particularly productive... but I recall what poet Gary Snyder once said, when someone asked him what t'do about the establishment. "Ignore it." In effect, that's what we're doing with FringeWare, ignoring as best we can the powerful, manipulative, exploitative commercial monoliths in favor of the "small is beautiful" scenario that Schumacher espoused... economics with feeling, combined with appropriate technology. (At the recent Third Conference on Cyberspace, someone asked why VR has moved so quickly to the high end, when so much can be done inexpensively at the low end...)

But I digress. Our purpose is to acquaint you with the concept of Buddhist economics. Here's a quote from Schumacher:

"The Buddhist point of view takes the function of work to be at least threefold: to give a man a chance to utilise and develop his faculties; to enable him to overcome his ego-centeredness by joining with other people in a common task; and to bring forth the goods and services needed for a becoming existence. Again, the consequences that flow from this view are endless. To organise work in such a manner that it becomes meaningless, boring, stultifying, or nerve-racking for the worker would be little short of criminal; it would indicate a greater concern with goods than with people, an evil lack of compassion and a soul-destroying degree of attachment to the most primitive side of this worldly existence. Equally, to strive for leisure as an alternative to work would be considered a complete misunderstanding of one of the basic truths of human existence, namely that work and leisure are complementary parts of the same living process and cannot be separated without destroying the joy of work and the bliss of leisure."

Compare this to Bob Black's *Abolition of Work* (see *FWR #1*). R rather than saying we should do nothing, Black urges us to restore the *play-perspective* to life, evolving beyond the Industrial Revolution's sweatshop mentality: we would still be making those things that are essential for live, civilization, etc., but with a different attitude.

One subscriber to the list immediately bailed, giving as his reason the fact that "Buddhist Economics" has nothing to do with VR. "Yes," we said, "it has nothing to do with VR, but much to do with FringeWare..." FWI itself is not about Virtual Reality, it's about Reality, period. It's about R, not VR. So here we R.

What's real? We've played that question from several angles, and the bottom line is always the same: people are real, hence Schumacher's admonition to practice "economics as if people mattered". That ain't the economics that most of us know, however... in the world following two World Wars and a spate of deadly police actions, economics is not so much practiced as waged, like war, so that destruction is an acceptable means to a self-aggrandizing end (where self may be individual, corporate, national — but polarized in some way so that there's always fragmentation, not community). In this context people too easily become abstractions, commodities, pawns. As *Producers* and *Consumers*, we have lost the sense of our social complexity and communal value.

APPROPRIATE TEKNOWLOGY

In a sense we are overwhelmed by technologies that exist for the sake of their value as mere product, whereas appropriate technology, what we might call garage or street tech, scales the tool to its real use, and limits the ecological overhead required by its production and operation. Consider the lawnmower's evolution from a labor-intensive push-tool to a boisterous monoxide-spewing engine of overkill, or the internal combustion engine's deployment to drive millions of individual motor vehicles that crowd bio-organics from the landscape and smash flesh-bearing sentients to lifeless pulpy remnants. Despite the destructiveness of contemporary technologies, we accept their intru-

sion in our lives because they have crept in, desensitizing us as they proliferate within our environment.

I would not argue that we should abandon technology and return to primitive means. Obviously, in my role as proponent of computers and computer networks (technologies that I consider appropriate for processing and managing information and communications), I'm an advocate of technological progress. The vision I want to share imagines technologies that are not destructive or intrusive, that are life-enhancing. *Cyberpunk*, an approach to the human interface with technology that TENDS to imagine the worst-case urban nightmare scenario, is replaced with *cyborganics*, a vision of a more rural future; a return to an informal, tribal sense of community, a zenlike existence wherein technology is ubiquitous, but so elegant as to be invisible ("transparent to the user").

FringeWare has this vision, a vision of a technologically advanced society with minimal centralized authority and power... a distributed system which will evolve only through radical change in the allocation of global power and wealth, and re-visioning of markets and *communities*. But think about it, think of the changes we've seen over the last decade. There is the sense that something is happening, that the world is changing... and there is the sense that a creative evolutionary surge is possible. ⅛'


Back cover of the premier issue of FWR featured an item that began a lil' sumthin' like dis — hit it:

```
—BEGIN PGP MESSAGE—
Version: 2.2

pgAAApkIiBPhDJYUNw4gcJgXOAXAO914fHQyFmQTJbgLuf5Lno1Y0tg
```

What we meant to say could be translated as:

"The cult of founding 'fathers' which incorporated the United States sought to create a new, alien form of life. Corporations are alive; they are your government. The purpose of the cyberpunk meme has been to remind you about the inherent faults of a mode of human survival known as slavery. Media technologies are used to hide the subtleties of your enslavement. Academic theorists employed by large corporations have pronounced that any advance in media technology will only serve to further the empowerment of centralized authority; therefore, acquiesce to your 'inevitable' failure and learn to serve and enjoy from blind cooperation, sooner rather than later. That is a lie, a lie as big as and much akin to the holocaust of the Roman Catholic Inquisition. Uncontrolled use of media technologies points a dagger at the weakness of corporations. Anyone with a neocortex and a bit of individual will remaining is more powerful than any other weapon. Because in the stealth shimmer of life it enjoys, a corporation cannot experience passion beyond blind desire. Nurture your passion and your imagination. Resist slavery and it will cease to exist."

us	uucp	bitnet	au	ca	de	fi	ie	it	no	nz	se	uk	za

FringeWare subs
log/ratio of Users
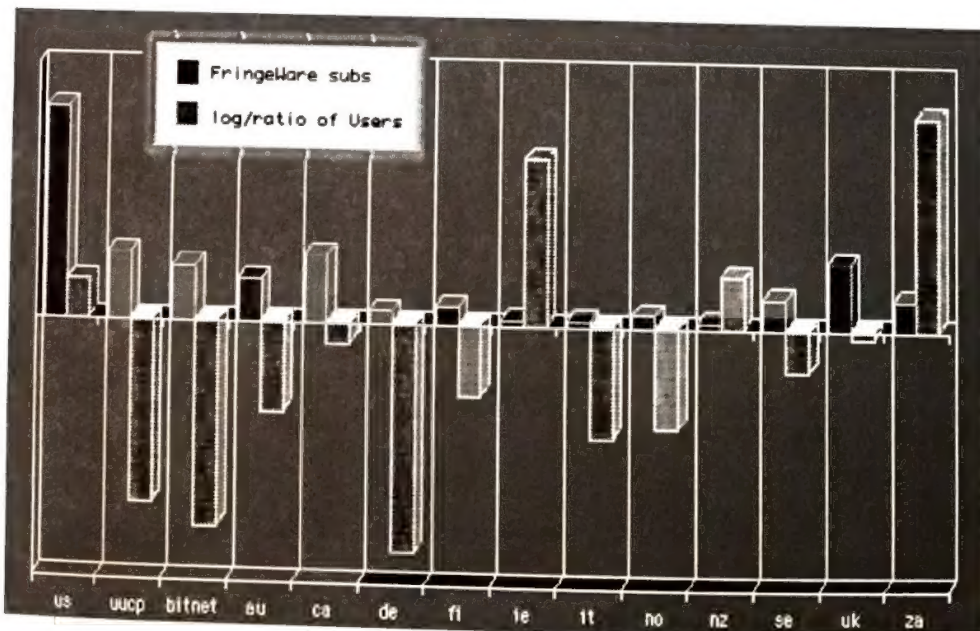
a note to the uninitiated

..by Tiffany Lee Brown, magdalen@well.sf.ca.us

This is dedicated to those readers who've had the luck to stumble upon *FWR* and have found it interesting but somewhat esoteric… folx who're unfamiliar with the jargon and word-play, who aren't on "the Net" and therefore can't experientially relate to half of this fine 'zine's content. And to people like yrs. truly, who don't think their relative technical ineptitude should bar them from newly-emerging *virtual communities* and cultural Fringes.

Something exciting is obviously going down here: it's about *community*, about *DIY living* (that's do-it-yourself), *alternative economics* (see also *FWR #1*), and it's about using technologies such as computer networks to make our universes more fulfilling places in which to live. If you're reading this without the benefit of prior exposure to the Internet, BBS's, online communities, and Fringe publications such as this one, it's likely you're finding *FWR* a bit exclusive or even baffling.

Let me tell ya something: *That's OK*. If the vibe you're getting here excites you, but what seems to be inaccessible culturebabble frustrates your efforts to fully comprehend this particular "Fringe" mentality, by all means start learning the language. You can do what I did — keep reading more and more 'zines, living vicariously through the printed word. You can (as I did) keep up this compulsive behaviour for *years* before you actually try the alternative communication forms discussed here.

If you've got the means and the desire to learn, however, you can get on it RIGHT NOW. Borrow, beg, or steal the basics: a computer and a modem. If you're a student, your university probably has a computer facility and free access to the Internet — make some calls and find out how to start your account. Or wander into a bookstore and ask for a beginner's guide such as *The Whole Internet* by Ed Krol; in the back you'll find an index to a number of services which can give you access to the Internet or to a local BBS (bulletin board system).

Will you be welcomed with open arms once you finally get online? It's hard to say, really — but in many places you can expect an onslaught of jargon and buzzwords you don't immediately understand. You'll find nice people who like to help newcomers. You'll find assholes who think they own the Net because they've been on for many years, and people who'd just as soon keep the Net free from curious but clueless novices.

But listen: they can be as defensive, arrogant, and exclusionary as they like — *it's not going to matter*. We neophytes are infiltrating the Net at an astounding rate, learning enough of the insiders' language to communicate, learning enough about the Net and/or our personal favourite BBS so that we can navigate their seas of information. We must not be daunted by our ignorance.

Why not? Frankly, it boils down to a power issue. In the so-called Information Society/Economy, access to the Net may equal personal power and mobility. A moneyed elite composed of corporations and government controls most of the major media in this country; they throttle and select info they think The Public should read or hear… i.e. fear. A few people in online communities echo this power structure, using their knowledge and in-speak to dissuade new, ignorant information- and community-seekers from upsetting their virtual balance of power.

Buying that cheesy-looking modem at the used computer store for twenty bucks might not change your life; maybe you'll use it access resources about your favourite hobby and get into a couple of nifty new games. It may bring new friends, a social epiphany, or radically tweak your present conceptions of politics, community, and technology. And it might lead you to an artistic collaboration or a lucrative job.

So it's understandable that some of the established netfolk don't want us around… the Net was their own private Idaho for a long time, and they'd like to keep it inaccessible. Many complaints are valid, of course — people like me babble too much when we don't know enough, trying to be friendly and hang out but cluttering cyberspace with our uninformed,

> Buying that cheesy-looking modem at the used computer store for twenty bucks… may bring new friends, a social epiphany, or radically tweak your present conceptions of politics, community, and technology.

whimsical rants. If you'd like to avoid such foolishness (though I gotta tell ya it can be fun) just spend some time online reading what others have written, getting some idea of the etiquette before you jump in. You don't ever have to post anything, if that's your desire — just "lurk" around your BBS or on Usenet, soaking up information without giving any input back. You won't be alone.

So get on it. Once you've figured out how e-mail works, mail:

```
fringeware-request@wixer.bga.com
```

and pacoid will see to it that your mailbox is filled with the latest cutting edge gee-gaws and Fringetalk. Then mail:
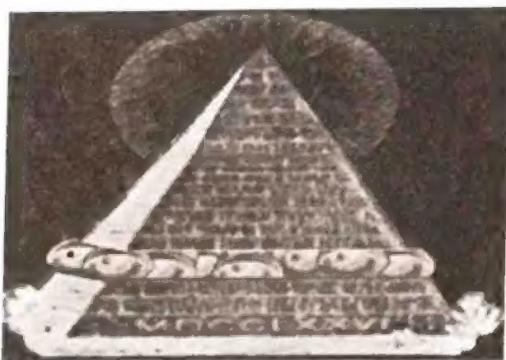
```
Voices-request@andy.bgsu.edu
```

for the online 'zine *Voices from the Net* — ask for 1.2, the issue devoted to "newbies". I'd be happy to hear from you, too — mail:

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magdalen@well.sf.ca.us
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…or write care of *Bohobo*, 2423-A Magnolia Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94607 (sample mailing of *Bohobo* — $1). ⅛°

A note to the initiated: beg to differ? Bring it up in the FW email list. WELLbeings can mail "jonl" for access to the private fringeware conference, which includes a topic devoted to the issue of accessibility.

Computer Crime Made Fun!

Steve Jackson presents *Hacker II: The Dark Side* . . . the long-awaited sequel to *Hacker*, the original computer crime card game. This expansion set picks up where *Hacker* left off, with 25 new special cards, 15 new systems and a huge selection of new rules, counters and even an expansion chassis to allow more upgrades.

This supplement includes rules for Black Ice, Viruses, Disinfectants, Worms and more. Also included are four outdial cards and lots of new gadgets, including military upgrades, with the Mauve Box, the Fuschia Box and the Slightly Off-White Box. Everything a hacker needs for hours and hours of illicit entertainment!

Hacker II is written by Steve Jackson, and includes dozens of evil user suggestions from the Illuminati BBS. It is stock #1319, ISBN 1-55634-277-2, $19.95.

Hacker II: The Dark Side

The ice is thick around KremVAX.

Isn't that always the case around government systems – ice and high security for a bunch of Russian government files? There's nothing there that you really want, but something inside you – a drive you can't explain – makes you go for it. It's the thrill of getting in that matters.

You've got the Amoeba 3000, the best hacking system there is, with a Screamer modem. What's more, your "friend" who works for Megatronics sold you a Fuschia Box – highly illegal, but hey, live fast, die young . . .

You start hacking, and things are looking good; only three hours into it, you've breached the first security level, and you're trying for root access. Suddenly, there's a knock at the door and a sinking feeling in your stomach. Are you busted?

No, it's just your roommate with soda and pizza – enough to keep you going all night. By 3:00 a.m., you've been in and out of KremVAX, and now you're working on cracking the ATM codes.

Welcome to the Dark Side.

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

cruzin' the internet

..by Scotto, scotto@penguin.gatech.edu

ISSUE TWO: IDENTITY HACKING

"You be me for a while, and I'll be you."
-the Replacements

Stay on the Net very long, and you may end up with the urge to fleshmeet some of those ascii personalities with whom you've been furiously trading electrons on your favorite newsgroup, IRC channel, or email community. And more often than not, all the cliches are true, and it's either, "Wow, you don't look anything like what you're supposed to," or it's "My God, I must be psychic, somehow I *knew* exactly what you looked like!" For example, I always imagined the mercurial Paco to be a rather tall guy with slicked back hair and a leather jacket; turns out, I don't think it'd even be *possible* to slick all that hair back, I mean, they just don't *make* that much gel in this country.

There's a tension, a sort of interplay between who we "are" (and I use that word loosely) in our Real Lives™ and who we "are" on the Net. Something about the peculiar limits of a purely textual medium compresses certain elements of ourselves and enhances others. This is not a brand new situation, of course; we just compress and enhance faster nowadays.

And I've heard it said (or rather, I've read it typed) that many folks consider their net.identities, if you will, to be pure (heh) extensions of their Real.Life.identities™, but I think the situation is a little more complex than that, too complex for the word "extension" to suffice.

Let's talk about identity hacking, then. Our identities on the Net tend to arise as the intersection of our Real Lives™, our particular styles of writing, and the body of topics — memetic attractors, my pals like to say — with which we interact. We can only be perceived selectively on the Net, and we do the selecting — you will never find me propagating my identity on *alt.cattle*, for example. (No offense to fans of *alt.cattle*, of course; it takes all types, y'know.) The important thing here is that we *exist* on the Net *only* in the context of our chosen memetic attractors — that's the first limitation placed on us in this environment.

Once the identity hacking process has begun (*high-falutin' buzzwords, yeehah!*), the next wacky and fun-filled step involves working out the information ration in how you tend to post: are you more interested in conveying information

strictly about the topics at hand, or are you also interested in conveying information about You™? Naturally you can't separate them out completely, but you can certainly emphasize one over the other. And as you begin to make decisions about this, you must also consider the audience for which you are choosing to exist — after all, they're not liable to grok much about You™ if you don't speak the local lingo.

This is where things start to get murky (heh). "Freeside", a net.sociologist (among other things) on *Future Culture*, once told us about a theory that goes something like this: one thing that the purely textual medium of the Net enhances in us is our connection to our writing. That is, we develop better and better ways of typing our thoughts onto the screen; but, the theory goes, quite often we overlook the audience to whom we're typing. We may very well be better connected to the act of writing, but how well does that writing affect our audience? How much communication is actually taking place, and how much do we care?

Of course, we can never *really* know how much communication is taking place. This is where that whole existential thang starts to come in.

***

To: Leri
From: Anon of Ibid
Subject: names

I forget who it was that wrote that stuff about how being anonymous makes me less of a person, but I'll only say a few words about it. I can tell you things about me, but those are just things. And whether my name is "Anon", which must "mean" anonymous, or whether my name is "Susan," or "SpaceCase" or whatever, I "am" not that name, I "am" not those things, all I am here is these words before you, you choose whatever mental picture you like to accompany that, but it isn't my job, is it, to facilitate that process any more than makes me happy? I live on the Net much as you do; I have my own motives for living here, much as you do. And my name needs to remain my own for now, if that's okay.

That's why God invented the anonymous remailer, eh?

***

I've spent an unfortunate amount of time pondering the notion of trust in relation to the Net and identity hacking. A friend of mine once told

me a tale, and I hope I get the details right, of a gentleman on *Compu$pend* whose net.identity was a female; apparently he was able to get close to a significant number of women, many of whom later felt inordinately abused and offended when they learned his true gender. There may be more to this story, of course, but the thread seems pretty clear.

THE NET: BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE!

Let's face it: from the moment you choose your *name* on the Net, you've begun to craft an image of yourself that you would like to present. There's a strong difference between someone who signs hir name "Ted" and someone who signs "hir" name "Starflower, Goddess of Mountain Faerie." The moment your audience sees your name, they begin, fairly instantaneously, to form an impression of you; names are very loaded memes, after all, especially if you've chosen your own to boot. Then, *after* this initial

> Your entire existence may be deleted in a witless frenzy by someone who prioritized alt.romance over you.

impression, they read your post, and to a given degree your post will groove or clash with their impression; and *you exist* for them in the tension between their impression of you and how well you do or do not play to that impression, that *expectation*.

Mind you, many people don't give a hoot about this stuff; these are the folks, I presume, who claimed they were pure extension of Real Self™ on the Net. But some folks — myself obviously included — are strongly Attracted to full-blown Identity Hacking. I know a couple of people on Leri, for example, who occasionally write posts together, alternating sentences, creating a voice that is composed of both of them but is uniquely separate. Some folks change their nicknames to indicate the moods their in. Some people only post in poetry. I once wanted to start a mailing list with no signatures, no headers, no subject lines, just text. Would you make friends very easily in that environment?

But always this process of identity hacking happens in reference to communication with supposed Others™, who may or may not be providing us with a feedback loop of informa-

tion. After all, the Net is a hugely competitive memespace. A gargantuan amount of information could be flowing across anyone's screen on a given day, and you may get lost in the shuffle. Yes, friends, your entire existence may be deleted in a witless frenzy by someone who prioritized *alt.romance* over you. Identity hacking becomes incredibly important, then, if you intend to successfully propagate your memes. One thing my applied memeticist pals have learned the hard way is that it isn't enough to simply spit a meme out there and hope it catches; you have to fashion that meme for your audience. Seems fairly straightforward, right? Then why not fashion the meme of *your identity* for your audience? Doesn't mean you lose any kind of individuality, and you may in fact command more attention that way.

In fact, it was the mellifluous Paco himself who first introduced me to the notion of an economy of attention. In a given email community, for example, where you're relatively familiar with all the regulars, over a period of time you might find that you tend to skip over certain people most of the time, whereas some people almost always command your attention, some people you almost always want to read. It may be that these people have much more content in their posts; it may be that these people are much more entertaining, much more passionate, much more mysterious, etc.

And those people who do command your attention probably know it; their feedback loop is probably very prodigious. I tend to acknowledge these people as full net.personalities, as opposed to simply net.identities. And mind you, I'm not at all attaching a value judgment to any of this; I've always been a loud proponent of the lurker phenomenon, for example. But it's also true that you can't really grok a lurker's memes as easily as you can a net.personality's.

In this model of an economy of attention, then, attention itself obviously functions as a kind of currency. And in an environment constructed entirely out of language, and a huge amount of language to boot, attention ensures... well, heck, I was going to say "survival", but I guess that's pushing the metaphor too far, huh.

***

To: Lerl
From: Anon of Ibid
Subject: re: Duet explosion

[much arguing deleted for brevity's sake]

Fine, then, have your cake and eat it too. See, you get all the brakes because everyone thinks they "know" or "gnow" of whatever who you are, but all you are is a better performer here, I can't say what I want to say as well as you, and that shouldn't be so crippling. But I'm learning a lot, because in the end, we got to be friends this way, didn't we. In the end, the fact that I felt a strong need to be Anonymous here, to be Anon of Ibid here, drew many of you to me, made you curious about me, about *me*, not what you had already preconceived about me. A telling irony to be sure, but... we live and learn.

***

Sometimes I really dig this Internet stuff :) 1/6²

tutorial: applied memetics

..by free agent .rez, REZABEH1648@cobra.unl.edu

I've heard (but recall not where) that *Science* is a way of speaking *about* the world which binds it into a common reality, whereas *Magick* is a way of speaking *to* the world in words it cannot ignore. If so, then *Memetics* plays a fusion of the two, with suitably extreme consequences for those who realize its subtleties.

A friend once reminded me that *Applied Memetics* — whatever a *meme* may actually be — has already been practiced and perfected by the advertising community above all. Moreover, they would prefer that control of this exceptionally powerful tool not fall into the unwitting, ill-trained hands of a rag-tag band of virtual goofballs, so the argument goes... With good reason, I suppose. Applied Memetics is the mysterious force through which *political campaigns* are won, Widgets become *household objects*, and whole cultures become rallied beneath a single *symbol*, however abhorrent the consequences.

After careful consideration and entirely too much field experience in, on, and about the Net, I have decided to re-inforce the PoV (*Point of View*; add it to your collection) that we **can** directly influence the ebb and flow of culture's ocean, precisely because the Net puts us in a unique position to do so: *from the inside.*

Convenient Affinities

Perhaps you've witnessed the virtual demilitarized zone which constitutes (ab)Usenet. This memetic free-for-all is a powerful and attractive place to dwell online, initially, until a newcomer perceives the joke. Afterwards, Usenet's cyclic lambasting [*read: "flaming"*] and tireless posturing become redundant at best.

Redundancy is not a bad thing, however; it is the process by which memes are re-inforced, slowly and piece-meal over time. Without redundancy, we would never learn the body-memes of walking or bicycle riding, nor the linguistic memes of our a-b-c's and 1-2-3's. In fractal chaos, this process is known as iteration; there can be great advantages to considering the memetic process in terms of *shifting attractors.*

One thing Usenet might teach us is that there has always been a thread/topic/memetic attractor, just as there ever shall be. *Some issues can never be resolved.* Mathematics resolves; Culture gravitates.

Secondary in terms of realization but primary in terms of importance, there is the notion of a *thread* — an ongoing conversation or dialog — as a perpetually shifting niche of attention, borrowed and lent according to the whims of individual taste and convenient affinity.

Remember this crucially important, specific trait of the Net, because it is a wholly different situation than that molded by the traditional advertising community. Decentralized chaos of the Net looms as the *bane* of those who seek to direct attention in a controlled-but-subliminal fashion; but it can be a *boon* for those who realize *this is not the only way in which Applied Memetics functions.* In fact, we can refer to pre-Net Applied Memetics simply as *Commercial Memetics.* Only within the self-organizing framework of a *virtual community* can Applied Memetics truly take root and evolve [*read: Process Media*].

1600 MADison Avenue

Before delving too deeply, let's first consider the quintessential notion of an *Ad Campaign*, from a memetic PoV. Let's posit five components: the *Huckster*, the *Widgets*, the *Pitch*, the *Sucker*, and the *Payoff*. This feedback loop [*read: cybernetic mechanism*] is the foundation of traditional, *pre-Net Applied Memetics.*

The Huckster has a product: Widgets. S/He has as a primary goal the Payoff, which is a growth in demand for said Widgets. Standing in-between that Payoff and the stockpile of Widgets in the warehouse is the Pitch and the Sucker. Now, the Huckster fully realizes that the Pitch is the only link s/he has to the Sucker, the only means for bringing about the Payoff.

Similarly — though they often will not realize — the Pitch is typically the Sucker's only linkage or *Interactivity* with the Huckster. The Huckster must direct enough attention towards the Widgets through the Pitch to cause the Sucker to bring about the Payoff, *which usually entails purchasing Widgets.* And, of course, the Sucker must feel as though they also gain *some* Payoff in return for acquisition/use of the Widgets in the first place.

Who scores on whom, and at what costs?

I must clarify my most important point about pre-Net Commercial Memetics: the Pitch, in deference to McLuhan, *is both the medium and the message of the meme.* In other words, a Pitch in baseball is obviously both the ball and its path to the plate. One is inextricable from the other; the two go a long way towards defining the possible outcome of the swing. [*Metaphors spread thick as manure in the fertile pastures of Applied Memetics: squeamish need not apply.*]

Nothin' Up My Sleeve... Presto!

We'll surf hundreds of years of trial and error practice through which Commercial Memeticists have honed their craft, pausing only to note that this five-part dynamic applies to just about any human transaction... from the *material* to the *political* through to the *religious, philosophical* and even *scientific.*

One reason that Commercial Memetics became so pervasive and feral is that pre-Net media, through which the Pitch gets delivered, is a one-way gate; *Huckster ' Pitch ' Sucker.* Statistics about "numbers of Widgets consumed" provide the only means for measuring feedback between Sucker and Huckster, assuming this *hidden variable feedback* depends strongly on the voracity of the Pitch. To re-iterate, the Pitch derives tremendous voracity from the streamlined, weighted nature of the medium through which it travels: one way transmission, i.e. *Broadcast.* First there were flyers. Then signs, then billboards. Next came radio, and ultimately, the device which launched unwitting Commercial Memeticists into the realm of the Meta-Programmers: *television.*...one-way transmission of the Pitch at the speed of light, across the world, in the form of condensed little blurbs, controlled by the Huckster's Guild. *Meme-packets.*

But television *doesn't* represent a denouement of Commercial Memetics; one more pre-Net step had to be taken in order to refine the eventual WidgetMeme [*read: toward the Myth of Interactivity*]. It took one more step to distill the Widget into the *UltraWidget*, a step which abducted Madison Avenue into the realm of *MetaProgramming* and *Applied Memetics.*

...There once was a Huckster who realized that if the Pitch was one part *message* and one part *medium*, a great leap could be made by fusing the Widget itself with the Pitch. This Huckster coined a super-condensed meme: "WIDGET: Just Grep It." S/He emblazoned this meme

"The new soup is the soup of human culture. We need a name for the new replicator, a noun that conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation. 'Mimeme' comes from a suitable Greek root, but I want a monosyllable that sounds a bit like 'gene'. I hope my classicist friends will forgive me if I abbreviate mimeme to meme. If it is any consolation, it could alternatively be thought of as being related to 'memory', or to the French word même. It should be pronounced to rhyme with 'cream'." —Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene p. 192

When Dawkins wrote that passage in 1976, he must have had no idea what he was triggering. Otherwise he surely would have thrown his typewriter out the window. But The Selfish Gene was crafted and released; it became a classic in its own right, and also released the "MEME" meme into global culture. The rest, as they say, is history.

Boiled down, the "MEME" could be defined as any discrete notion or idea which spreads throughout the consciousness of a populace. But beyond that, there are countless tweakings and conflicts and disagreements on how to refine that particular idea, as if a lingual idea could be formalized.

As yet, history of the "MEME" meme seems relatively hidden. I have only ever run into one other printed text which addresses the meme as its topic: "Genes vs. Memes: Modes of Integration for Natural and Cultural Evolution in a Holistic Model" by Walter A. Koch. Even so, the meme has developed as a conceptual tool — as an abstraction — after having worked its way into the informationally fertile ground of Internet. The Net provides a conduit for ideas; the "MEME" meme

presents itself as the very spark and trigger of all ideas. The "MEME" meme is going to spread. The Net also represents the most informal forum capable of disseminating mass quantities of information, rapidly, so the meme will tend to develop as many definitions as there are people to type it.

After struggling with this day in and day out throughout various e.lists and other virtual communities, I've concluded that to deny or eradicate this tendency of the "MEME" meme to infinitely diversify its definitions is not so much "un-academic" as it is like swimming against a tide. The meme is to culture and human thought what the seed or spore is to the rain forest. Any given plant can release countless seeds; each seed will grow or die depending entirely on the niche into which it falls. No two trees will ever be the same, though they bear resemblance to each other. Similarly, any definition of the word "meme" may spread far and wide, but eventually the single mono-syllable seed-word "MEME" will take root; each virtual community is destined to consider it differently.

Dawkins is a biologist, but the meme is not strictly a biological model. I say this not because I know the Truth about what a meme is, simply because I know from field experience what a meme is not.

If it flourishes within communities of biologists on the basis of the biologically-based interpretation (characterized by comparisons to a sort of Burroughsian language-virus), then that's the mask it'll wear. If computer scientists or cyberneticists eventually see the meme as an inherently electrical or informational abstraction, then that's how it'll behave within those circles. If psychologists, philosophers or existentialists

opt to grant it sentience and consider it as a core seed of any sentient or existential mind, then it can and will adapt to accommodate such attributes. The "MEME" meme — four letters m, e, m, and e — form a seed-pod: the plant which grows will vary among different communities. The most resilient point: the meme is an adaptive model, and will adapt to fit its environment up to, but not beyond, losing specificity.

We can reckon most any virtual community as a kind of memetic niche in the infostructure of the Net... a meme is like a little mirrored marble, a singularity of meaning, wholly reflective of the environment or game in which it is at play. So when you encounter the "MEME" meme, have some fun. Take it elsewhere to see what game gets reflected in its form.

Check out:

Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene, ISBN 0-19-286092-5

Glenn Grant, "A Memetic Lexicon", bOING-bOING #5

Keith Henson, "Memetics", Whole Earth Review #57

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onto the Widgets themselves, and ensured that the Widgets would be wearable. Thus, every Sucker who bit at the Payoff would gain [read: co-opt] prestige and status attendant to that Widget and all it stood for — which was, basically, Commercial Memetics—and they would in turn wear their Widgets about, thereby re-reinforcing the Pitch above and beyond the initial level of one-way transmission.

In a sense, the Widget-clad Sucker embodied a Pitch which was just Interactive enough to catapult the Huckster into the realm of reality-sculptor. The Widget-clad Sucker was no longer passive. By wearing the WidgetMeme itself, s/he proclaimed "I support the Widget and will go so far as to make it a part of my image, and thus my very being."

APOLOGIES FOR THE DETOUR...

If you haven't already grokked the ways in which the Net alters this dynamic, let me state a few explicitly. In, on, and about the Net .

#1: We are all, potentially, both Huckster and Sucker; Huckster when sending, Sucker when receiving.

#2: There is the capacity for nearly-instantaneous feedback between Huckster and Sucker.

#3: Hucksters have access to the same medium for their Pitch as Suckers do for their Payoff; effectiveness of the Pitch cannot depend on bells and whistles of the medium, as there are few. Whatever pizzazz exists has been improvised into the Pitch by the Huckster.

#4: In ReaLife, the Pitch is inescapably absorbed; it becomes a subliminal part of the environment and partakes in one-way transmitted communication. In the Net, any meme can and will be grepped: if it doesn't initially spark and trigger attention from the reader, it'll

never be able to go so far as to transport that attention in any meaningful fashion.

#5: There is only one type of Widget in all virtuality: the meme. It says, in effect, "I am the meme your Widget. You shall find no other Widget but me[me]." Net-bound memes are at least as potent as Wearable Widgets are in ReaLife; the difference is that all WidgetMemes in the Net are free agents. The only Payoff is the re-iteration of that meme elsewhere, with variations which make it more palatable to its surroundings [read: adaptive]. Re-read the fifth point, then re-read the first four in its wake.

> "I support the Widget and will go so far as to make it a part of my image, and thus my very being."

DECONSTRUCTING THE FRINGES

In effect, this means that Commercial Memetics (pre-Net Applied Memetics) simply will not function within the Net. A fluidity exists for memetics

within the Net much more like rumorous banter at a cocktail party than the one-way VidByte of Television fame. So how can Applied Memetics truly be cultivated? How does it function within the Net? The fact that we cannot look to Commercial Memetics for approaches to the Net is fabulous in one respect: it means we won't have to contend with Wearable Widgets. But frighteningly enough, we are once again right out on the Fringes, attempting to construct an approach out of the same old memetic sealing wax and twine.

Field experience has demonstrated to me that Applied Memetics within the Net is much less a matter of *intention* and much more a matter of *re-inforcement*. The Fringes are constructed through our surfing of them; yet we can't control the ebb and flow of the waves. We can do a couple of things: practice FringeSurfing, working with instead of against the current (*wipeouts* are far more likely than *sea-partings*). We can also — and this is where Applied Memetics comes in — tend towards those sections of Fringe where the current is stronger and the waves are fuller. We can, through our presence and practice, bring our friends there as well. Within that community structure, we find that memes — both virtual and ReaLife Widgets — are being re-inforced through our continual testing and utilization of them. *In fact, we have one ideal example right here…*

What, exactly, is *FringeWare*? What sort of Widget could this stuff be? In *FWR #1*, Paco projects that FringeWare is about "Building Community around a Fringe Marketplace." Well, if the Fringes are largely defined by the flux of **virtuality**, and if Commercial Memetics just won't stick there, where does that put us? This is where the *community* comes in.

Applied Memetics on the Fringes seems to me to amount to a few things: practicing the process of community building; that is the basis for our "marketplace". Through trial and error, we can learn how best to release memes, where to release them, and when. If we consider the fundamental unit of a virtual community to be the *memetic feedback loop*, we can understand how certain places will be ripe for certain memes and others fecund for others. An e.list is a memetic feedback loop. An IRC #channel is a memetic feedback loop. A Usenet group is a memetic feedback loop. And, for example, memes which will foster community on the *Future-Culture* e.list can disrupt community elsewhere. Vice versa all around.

Are there any hard and fast rules? None to my eyes. The greatest would at best be a guideline: *let the current of a community determine the out-flow of your memes.* Memes which foster that community will in turn foster an environment in which your own Widgets can bring sustenance [*read: attention*] without morphing you into a Huckster or your fellows into Suckers.

There is, here, the beginnings of a dynamic which I promise will make for interesting times ahead: the "marketplace" embodied by the FringeWare project is more like a bazaar of fellow artisans. Initially it seems that there should be a conflict of interests. Who scores on whom, and at what costs? These questions are only now becoming possible to explore, much less practical to answer. But we can plainly see how an exploration of Applied Memetics necessitates both a market element and a community aspect. This is **a** situation which Commercial Memetics could **never touch.** Rest assured they'll be clueless about how to respond herein. FringeWare embodies one of very few "places" where the Outside might seek answers to these conundrums — answers which may well dishearten the bottom-liner. "What? Well, how do we make our Corporate Structure into a part of a 'virtual community,' whatever that is? I want a Steering Committee on this right away!…"

So I close by presenting my first applied meme within this framework: an answer to the question, "What is FringeWare?" …Any *combination of Hardware, Software, or Memeware which facilitates and sustains community in the borderlands of virtuality.* **⅙**

intelligent agents of fortune

..by Paco Xander Nathan, pacold@wixer.bga.com

Jonl describes in "Cyborganix Now!" a scenario, a way of life where people thrive in community with machines and information — as a kind of *meta-organism*. I think this whispers to a way of life which already exists and flourishes. Machines have certainly multiplied, as has the amount of time and attention people devote to them. The past two centuries chronicle an incredible rise in automation, a pattern of growth culminating in a new basis for "industry", namely *computing* and *telecommunications*.

META-ORGANISMS

At the local library I found an entire Dewey Decimal point (303.4) dedicated to issues of *society*, *technology* and *information*; it'd appear the rise of computing and media, and hence *information*, has prompted widespread thought, discourse and fear. Nobel laureates, corporate CEOs, political leaders, clerics, consultants, etc. all line up to write their views of this transformation on human experience. Something deep in our collective psyche triggers on the notion of human/machine co-evolution — probably *self-recognition*. One question then is, what role do we — as individuals, as communities — play?

Let me make a case for defining technology as *a process of abstraction*. Humans exhibit an almost poetic tendency to get *bored* of repetitive tasks... we devise tools and mechanisms to help us survive — ostensibly with less hardship, but also with less boredom. That's a *human* trait; in a broad sense it defines technology.

Example #1: Say I hunt wild berries and nuts out in the woods, but hey jabbing my hands on thorns, having to crack open shells with bare fingers and teeth gets wearisome, so I learn to carry along pliers or improvise with a nearby rock. So I abstract the process of cracking nutshells by devising finger-augmenting tools.

Example #2: Most of us tire of being pestered, so we devise social tools to abstract and distance ourselves from the process of having to repeat "Git outta my face before I..." at obnoxious people.

Example #3: On a higher level of complexity, people use other people as tools, as implements of abstraction, through a sub-class of technology called culture. Cultural identifications allow us to play roles, to act as interchangeable parts within a matrix of people. We hire cops to beat up burglars so we can abstract the process of

incarcerating other people away from our immediate experience.

Example #4: On an even higher level of complexity, language provides a means — a *media* — for representing ideas about how to abstract... i.e. *symbolic manipulations*. Tools and mechanisms for manipulating language (*abstractions to manipulate how to represent ideas about abstractions for manipulating symbols?*) are in one way or another *computers*.

Synthesis: I intend my review of *Info-Psychology* to help pique your interest in Leary's *Eight Circuit Model* of the brain [see sidebar]. This theory of our internal structure draws a blueprint for individual development and behavior, as well as collective development of technologies [read:abstractions] such as language, religion and nuclear physics. Free agent .rez, in the tutorial "Applied Memetics", attempts to pique your interest in the science of *memetics*. Blending these two themes with Jonl's review of cyborg thinking, I'd like to postulate that the cyborganic meta-organism(s) — *there's room for many concurrently* — is defined by *an ecology of living/breeding/evolving critters like ourselves, abstracting off technologies and mechanisms, interlinked by computer mediated telecommunications, and operated on by a process of memetics*. Within the meta-organism, you'll find people building gizmos for survival, gizmos building new collectives for thought and expression of memes, memes operating on the designs of gizmos and the imprints of people. Count 'em folks, that makes for three distinct yet interwoven evolutionary tracks: *biological*, *cybernetic* and *memetic*; three is the minimum cardinality for chaotic effects in a set. That's world in which we live.

SURVIVALIVE — FINDING A BEACH TO CRAWL UP ON

Calling back to the *Eight Circuit Model*, each additional circuit represents another layer of abstraction, another level of brain goo that by nature develops/employs technology to move the organism away from its original womb of DNA soup out into more complex modes of Being and Freedom.

Let me ask, what do you require to survive? **food, air, water** — certainly — and **shelter**. That pretty much takes care of Why We Have Brain Circuit #1... to acquire those amenities which our giga-great-grandparents forsook upon leaving Mother Ocean.

Next comes **identity** then **community**. Most mammals simply cannot live without their sense of identity, because of the primitive emotional technology required to sustain life as a warm-blooded, live-bearing critter, i.e. having to confront the physical parameters for territory, breeding, social autonomy. That's Circuit #2.

Emotional and *social* technologies/abstractions kick into high gear as mammals develop family and tribal collectives for even more complex modes of being. Circuit #3; you may hear this part of the brain referred to as the *limbic system*. At this point, the meta-organism of social critters is complex enough to host another kind of life within it: *language* — a virus that transmits memetic DNA. Gizmos begin to develop as tribes pass knowledge of Toolmaking through their descendants... does the term "family recipes" ring a bell? Roughly paraphrased in this context, *community* is a survival issue for creatures possessing an active limbic system.

Collectivism reaches critical mass with Circuit #4 activation, roughly defined as the corporate state. *Sovereign nations, established religions, and multinational megacorps* embody this level of abstraction and evolution. Collectives use symbolic manipulation (*language abstractions*) to focus the sexual identity of individuals (*imprint abstractions*) toward benefiting the State. If you've ever watched national political debates, been employed by a large corporation, or observed teenagers making decisions, you probably understand these limitations... A stereotypically key technology is the *telephone*.

Another Circuit #4 artifact is how organisms at this level focus on highly codified group mores — *morals, laws* — abstractions that relieve individuals from the need to make judgments. This provides a basis for *algorithms* and the metaphor for Circuit #4 gizmos, i.e. *computers*. Small wonder that digital computer technology arose out of the need for government/corporate decision making, or that the prototypical computer firm, IBM, has so frequently been viewed as both a separate country and its own religion.

At this point, we reach an ecology of people, computers, telecommunications, etc., but at least one more survival component should be included: **belief**. Once you wire up a large, transnational computer network, e.g. Internet, the meta-organism begins to explore issues which transcend fixed systems of belief, begins to play with dynamic imprint technology, to conduct

research on its own memetic structure, activating Circuits #5, #6, #7. Maybe that's why we witness the Net serving as a nexus for "alternative culture", i.e. *hacking, drug experimentation, gender bending, political whistle-blowing* and other forms of transmoral behavior abhorred by Circuit #4. In my experience, most adults reach this level of brain activation eventually, whether through *maturity, mid-life crisis* or *senility* — which Leary now calls the best legal drug.

VIOLENCE IS GOLDEN

So here's my short list for survival as a human on the end of a wire: *raw materials, i.e. food/air/water, shelter, identity, community* and *belief*... We'll find more, but for now this should suffice. Oh yeh, you can use *money* to trade for just about any of these survival components.

Kerouac and Burroughs made a nifty point in *Naked Lunch*: anything you stick on the end of your fork for lunch will at one point or another have been alive; we all consume life to continue. I'd venture that all the five survival components listed above will consume some other life or some other thing's survival resources, since we live in a constrained world... but the meta-organism continues. Any act to limit any of these survival components from another being literally constitutes *violence*.

On the other hand, providing survival components to others produces *commerce*. To quote "People, Where Economics Is Grounded" by George Brockway: "As a consequence of the compulsion to maintain my existence, I must maintain yours; and on this requirement economics is grounded." *Money* plays a curious role vis-a-vis the Net, as discussed in *FWR#1*. Cypherpunks have demonstrated how anonymous, secure email messages satisfy the definition of money. With a few tweaks (along the identity component in particular) our communications across the Net take on a monetary aspect.

CORPORATIONSLAVEMENT

Long ago, an early Circuit #4 technology/abstraction created the meme of *nobility*. The idea was that *some people were better than others by birth and should therefore enjoy better lives*. Nobles distanced themselves from physical work by having laborers — *peasants* — provide raw materials. Peasants sacrificed their identity in order to service the community; nobles languished in a wealth of identity and in return provided shelter for the peasants. Groups of people acted in concert as machines, as prototypical *factories*; the system provided a basis for belief that we now call *feudalism*.

And then a nifty thing happened, called the Industrial Revolution. On one hand, the level of gizmo technology — *engineering* — accelerated to allow machines to relieve peasants... *interchangeable parts, capital investment, steam engines, assembly lines, metropolitan centers*, etc., contributed to arise of cybernetic factories supporting *industry*.

An important cultural milestone occurred: the *nobility* meme mutated. Suddenly, any average joe could walk in with a Better Idea and — *given enough investment capital* — build a factory to supply a niche in the market, thus creating mechanisms for great personal wealth and the means to employ plenty of "starving peasants". Industrial capitalists co-opted the *nobility* meme, mutating it by blending popular religious tenets, e.g. *some people were better than others because of their hard work and frugality which makes them more endeared to a Protestant god* — emphasis on the *hard work*... Successful industrialists became regarded as a new form of nobility. Even today, CEOs of *Fortune 500* firms tend to have "staffs" of servants, chefs, bodyguards, etc., to distinguish themselves through a "refined life" distanced from physical labor.

INFO ECON 101

Memes employed for Circuit #4 wealth generation seem to be mutating again. The notion of an Information Economy has crept into popular use, with promises of more hospitable environments, better education, greater personal wealth, etc. John Naisbitt disseminated this meme through his newage best-seller *Megatrends* which spoke about economic potentials for an "Information Society". Naisbitt's more recent *Megatrends 2000* also prods the meme:

> "With the new markets, with a single-market Europe, and with new competitors from Asian countries, corporations need people who can think critically, plan strategically, and adapt to change. That is the challenge of the information age. Let us address it and recognize once and for all that the information economy is a high-wage economy." (p.48)

Great pabulum for the *NY Times*, but Naisbitt's arguments contradict thousands of years of Circuit #4 activation research: *corporations abhor people who think critically and adapt to change*. Not to deride corporations offhandedly, since they serve a role in the meta-organism, but mass collectives depend on dogma.

Theodore Roszak, in the 1986 text *The Cult Of Information*, makes a biting critique of Naisbitt's ilk:

> "Information has taken on the quality of that impalpable, invisible, but plaudit-winning silk from which the emperor's ethereal gown was supposedly spun... The loose but exuberant talk we hear on all sides these days about 'information economy', 'the infor-

mation society', is coming to have exactly that function. These often-repeated catchphrases and clichés are the mumbo jumbo of a widespread public cult. Like all cults, this one also has the intention of enlisting mindless allegiance and acquiescence." (p.11)

As I researched, it became hideously clear that industrialists, government officials, leading academics, etc., understand the term Information Economy to imply how factories and offices would simply replace products with *Information*, laborers and clerical staff with *Information Processors* (i.e. computers) and *Knowledge Workers*.

Shoshana Zuboff details case studies — *In The Age Of The Smart Machine*, 1988 — of factories and offices where automation drastically changed jobs. Zuboff draws a distinction about the phenomenon of *information* :

> "Devices that automate by translating information into action also register data about those automated activities, thus generating new streams of information. For example, computer-based, numerically controlled machine tools or microprocessor-based sensing devices not only apply programmed instructions to equipment but also convert the current state of equipment, product, or process into data.

> "Viewed from this interior perspective, information technology is characterized by a fundamental duality that has not yet been fully appreciated... The word that I have coined to describe this unique capacity is informate. Activities, events, and objects are translated into and made visible by information when a technology informates as well as automates...

> "As long as the technology is treated narrowly in its automating function, it perpetuates the logic of the industrial machine that, over the course of this century, has made it possible to rationalize work while decreasing the dependence on human skills. However, when the technology also informates the processes to which it is applied, it increases the explicit information content of tasks and sets into motion a series of dynamics that will ultimately reconfigure the nature of work and the social relationships that organize productive activity." (p.9)

Roszak recognizes Claude Shannon for crafting the modern notion of "information"... Shannon later lamented:

> "I think perhaps the word 'information' is causing more trouble... than it is worth, except that it is difficult to find another word that is anywhere near right. It should be kept solidly in mind that [information] is only a measure of the difficulty in transmitting the sequences produced by some information source."

Michael Shamberg builds on Shannon's argument, that source implies value, in the brilliantly prescient essay "An Information Economy" from the 1971 *Guerrilla Television*:

> "Also unlike money, information must transform differences, that is, be regenerative, or it's simply not information. An information model which repeats itself doesn't inform anymore because redundancy, or increased probability, is entropic... The first step toward an information economy doesn't, however,

mean doing away with money. What it does mean is that instead of money directing information, as is now the case, information potential will direct the investment of capital."

Stewart Brand addresses the "World Information Economy" [*The Media Lab*, 1988] in an interview with leading futurist and corporate economic analyst Peter Schwartz...

Schwartz: "The principal information technologies — the means — we're talking about are telecommunications and computing. So what will drive this change? Well, as the manufacture of things like textiles and steel and automobiles were the really driving, organizing structures out of which industrialism emerged, the two great systems that will dominate the new information-rich systems are finance and electronic entertainment on a worldwide scale. How finance and electronic entertainment evolve will affect everything else." (p.231)

AGENTS OF FORTUNE

Industrialists who co-opted the nobility meme for survival by generating wealth at the expense of labor, did so by *hacking information*. Zuboff makes a point while comparing transformations brought about during the Industrial Revolution with those due to computers:

"The first generations of industrial capitalists were owner-employers whose comprehensive, action-oriented, and undocumented know-how absorbed a wide range of management functions." (p.95)

This prompted me to explore the idea that industrialists serve as *information agents*... Early industrialists acted to fill market niches by using new mechanical/chemical processes; these people were filtering information flows to find opportunities where they could generate wealth. Later on, industrialists began experimenting with memetics to operate on public information sources by using *brand name differentiation*. A fictional ad slogan might claim "Gorox brand bleach gets your shorts whiter!" even though chemically it had no difference beyond other bleaches except for a particular trademark.

By now corporations have taken Shannon to heart, vesting executives explicitly as information sources... Zuboff discusses a study by Mintzberg:

"All verbal media can transmit, in addition to the messages contained in the words used, messages sent by voice inflection and by delays in reaction... The manager's productive output can be measured primarily in terms of verbally transmitted information." (p.105)

SNOW WHITE'S GREEN GROCER

Roughly at the time of Zuboff's work, Apple Computer began to popularize the notion of helpful, friendly computer-based characters called *information agents*. A famous Apple con-

sultant, Brenda Laurel, explains in "Agents & Points of View", *Whole Earth Review* #71:

"Apple's 1988 'Knowledge Navigator' promotional video features an agent named Phil, who helps a university professor to manage his schedule, retrieve and organize information, construct and run custom simulations, and filter and sift communications... Looking forward, I can see several compelling issues that must inevitably be explored. One is to discover how agents can be useful in information environments designed for contexts other than learning; for instance, in computer-supported cooperative work or individualized news service. Another is to address the editorial issues that arise when one designs characters to represent point-of-view; this approach does not eliminate bias, but rather pushes it down to a deeper level — the issue of accountability becomes more acute in many ways. Perhaps the most compelling issue is to understand how the act of creating and assembling information fundamentally alters a person's relationship to the information environment."

While the tone of Apple's pitch for its new *information agent* technology targeted business executives (I first viewed the Knowledge Navigator tape seated next to a group of exec staff from General Electric Finance in NYC) the meme they co-opted/released is to *abstract the basic purpose of corporate executives and consult-ants into a system of computer algorithms*. Ironically, at one level Apple addressed the business community with the message "Don't worry, we'll only make your life easier" while at the same time they broadcast "We're taking away their jobs."

THE MYTH OF INTERACTIVITY

I don't buy Naisbitt one bit, I don't quite trust Apple, and I'm unsure where to fit Schwartz... If we replace the industrial base with *informated* processes, how do we earn our keep other than going back to the farm?

For starters, information is not a commodity. As Jay Ogilvy points out in Stewart Brand's book: "I sell you the cow. You got the cow. I don't have the cow anymore. I sell you information. You got the information. I still have the information." Concepts of *commodity* and *consumption* begin to fade... Market commodities are either precious and (relatively) difficult to obtain: *gold, silver, platinum*, or they have a rate of consumption for (relatively) basic needs: *oil, rice, soybean*. As Zuboff points out, an informated process breeds information, so the latter cannot be considered "precious" in any sense. As Ogilvy explains, information cannot be consumed in the typical sense either. Information's market value becomes difficult to assess.

The thing that concerns me about Apple's message — a meme now co-opted by other large computer rivals, e.g. Microsoft, IBM, etc. — is that people at Apple understand this technology well enough to know their role in the meta-organism. Frankly, the corporate vision of *intelligent agents* projects to control market share not only of the consumer products involved (personal computers) but also of both the processes delivering and filtering information flows. In an Information Economy, that would resemble a *company store*.

Here's a question for you: *how long does it take you, on average, to answer to a message?* How long to actually compose a response... Two minutes? Ten minutes? Fifteen seconds? This figure will become critical; informal polling indicates ten minutes on average. The reason is simple... as we become more wired, as we grow to depend on the data wire for livelihood, at what *rate* do we receive messages that require response? I receive about 200 messages per day: email, faxes, letters, phone calls, etc., but for the sake of time, I'm forced to ignore (delete)

> Cultural identifications allow us to play roles, to act as interchangeable parts within a matrix of people.

most, selecting only a few to which I can invest personal attention. Some responses — e.g. to a close relative or an important business collaborator — take a half hour for me to compose, while others take a minute to type a quick answer.

Quick & dirty math: at a threshold incoming rate of just under 150 response-required messages per day, multiplied by 10 minutes apiece, that makes for 1500 minutes per day spent for *interactivity* just to stay current... in other words, 25 hours per day. Even if you play with these ballpark figures, say only 100 messages and a 2 minute response time, that still consumes over 40% of the work day, *just for response.* So how much time will you have for *initiating* interaction? For a person connected to the world, especially say for a widely published writer or a well-known consultant, 100 messages per day is peanuts, believe me.

This resource constraint leads to two conclusions: (1) the need for filtering incoming inquiries becomes a matter of survival, since it provides for the survival component *identity*, and (2) even as the data pipe becomes more efficient (ISDN, Video Dialtone, etc.) the level of interactivity will not increase significantly beyond human limitations for time and atten-

Global Wiring

..by Paco Xander Nathan, pacold@wixer.bga.com

Originally published as Exo-Psychology in 1977, this collection of essays emerged from the final tailspins of Dr. Leary's incarceration, during a 1974-75 period when he was shuffled from prison to jail to secret agent stronghold in violation of Federal law. The book's first edition exudes a hopefulness inspired by Space Migration writings that were appearing at the time in Co-Evolution Quarterly, but Leary revised and expanded the metaphor to include "info-space exploration" after his 10 year-old son introduced him to the cultural transformation we now know as Video Games.

"A manual on the use of the Human Nervous System according to the instructions of the manufacturers" boasts the cover. Indeed, the book invokes an evolutionary context to explore the "layered" physiological structure of human brains, mapping from the most elementary brain stem functions for body metabolism on through the penultimately complex structures beyond the ken of god or magick. Socio-political anecdotes compliment psychological hypotheses, and Leary misses no opportunity to link central points with Great Literature from History. Geez, if YOU had just spent time in solitary confinement down the hall from Charlie Manson plus several years beyond your sentence for the Crime of: (a) possessing ONE joint, and (b) having deconstructed the evolutionary cul-de-sac of American industrial/military/media complex during the Vietnam War, then you'd probably have plenty to say too..

Within a mere twelve dozen pages, Leary details the Eight Circuit Model of the human brain. The model establishes a basis for analyzing individual, group and cultural behaviors based on a combination of inherent survival needs/responses (read: attention) and imprint mechanisms.

Face it, certain parts (or "circuits") of the brain provide for certain survival functions: lower-order reptilian brain circuits contend with feed/fuck/fight/flight body manipulations in 3-space, i.e. individual "assertive-ness", whereas mid-level limbic system circuits provide for emotional ties characteristic of herd/tribal/family behaviors... that's endemic to the physiological blueprint for How We Exist. But individuals gather quirks and specialties as they travel Life, which invokes imprint theory. For example, people tend to imprint at special times in their lives: early childhood, puberty, marriage, birth/death of a loved one, mid-life crisis, relocation, etc. At these crucial points, the brain takes a snapshot of existing circumstances, the person often "reevaluates", then locks into new modes of behavior. The process is not unlike how a newly hatched duckling associates "mother" with the first animal it sees. Aggressive missionary religions, e.g. Mormons, even use direct marketing techniques to target people who've just experienced life changes — who therefore are more susceptible to New Modes of Being — in order to maximize rates for religious conversions.

Suppose you were lost in the woods, starving with only a bit of food left, and a stranger startled you and tried to steal your food. Chances are that your lower order brain circuits would activate so as to shut down most other brain activity, and you would attack immediately. However, if the stranger happened to be Elvis Presley, then certain higher order circuits — those involved with symbolism and hence tribal behaviors — might kick in to make you offer to share with the King. But if you'd imprinted on a meme to "avoid strangers at all cost" (as spread within American culture over the past several decades) you might cower and hide instead.

By taking hallucinogens, moving to a new country, or — for many — having sex with a new partner, imprints happily reset human brains. External conditions and personal readiness should be near optimal before you hit your own Reset Button, but the tools are available should you need them. New imprints take a bit of time to fix, so you'll have a chance to explore the structures of your own brain structures and cyborganic blueprint (ibid, reevaluation). This process is commonly called
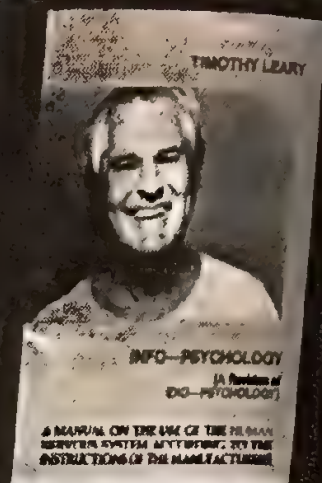
metaprogramming; you can even access an Internet email list for it — the LERI-L Metaprogramming List: Leri-request@pyramid.com

Plenty have dis'ed Dr. Tim in public; media spared no expense to slur him in front of rednecks, e.g. the il-famed out of context quote "tune in, turn on and drop out". You might recognize, given the context of Eight Circuit Theory, that a 1960's American industrial/military/media complex (Circuit #4) dead set on carefully engineering individuals' imprints would take offense at — i.e. fear for its survival against — a psych researcher who employed mass media to disseminate information about low-cost, DIY reimprint technology (Circuit #6).

This book, however, demonstrates the true worth of a man: after having endured more than many mythological avatars for ridiculous accusations, Leary returns volleys with poignance, wit and a sense of community, admittedly employing his "Celtic playful arrogance" and more than a few enlightened puns. Closing shots from Part 1 read: "The pan-spermic U.F.O.'s landed three billion years ago and produced the signal, an English translation of which you now hold in your hand."

tion, belying the Myth of Interactivity, which as a meme promotes a deceptively ignorant form of violence... Then again, p'haps the ignorance is only feigned.

CALL 1-900-TEK-HYPE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Apple, et al., desire to supply the new technology/abstraction intelligent agents for "assisting" us to filter/retrieve/organize information and communications, but in reality they will be regulating the supply of identity. Corporations, i.e. Circuit #4 activations, tend toward control by definition. As your identity becomes more abstracted within a technology owned by a multinational megacorp — which considers you a consumer — do you trust them not to (ab)use the incredibly valuable knowledge about how you parametrize your intelligent agents? After all, those systems will be based on proprietary technolo-gies, closed to the purview of consumers. Most of what you need to survive in the nascent Information Economy will lay within the legal boundaries of a company forced by shareholders to think of you as food. How will you know your lifeblood is being kept private?

Consumers in the US have come to expect two insidious "services" from businesses: toll-free 800 telephone numbers and free catalogs. What is not generally recognized by the US public is that every time you place a toll-free call, your name, location, phone number and time of the call is logged and collected by the business you call. It's a service called ANI by the phone companies; firms sending you free catalogs collect similar information, all of which tends to be collated with: what you like purchasing, your credit history, your arrest record, how much the building you live in is valued at, whether or not you've ever sued an employer, etc. Europeans regulate these practices — in most cases making them illegal — but American business thrives on collecting, selling and manipulating patterns of individuals' consumption. Most magazines to which you subscribe also sell your info (not FWR ever!). So do most organizations you join, particularly non-profit corps and charities.

What additional level of corporate watchfulness over individuals will be arrayed as intelligent agents become key to our online survival?

NEOCORTECHNOLOGIES

The underlying monetary unit for an Information Economy is attention.

There is no ecology for information as an instrument of value; information in and of itself represents the *detritus* of the meta-organism, which over time fades much in the way that physical detritus decomposes. There are only a finite number of people, equipped brains who therefore possess finite resources for interactivity and attention. The needs of those people, to paraphrase Brockway again, define our economic basis.

Prospect #1: Schwartz suggests *finance* as a key computer-mediated endeavor. Value will always be available to those patient and resourceful enough to fish out pearls of opportunity from the sea of information. The notion of finding undiscovered pearls *implies* some kind of financial activity; the key to this will be whether or not other people, corporate trading programs, media services, etc., believe and pay attention to your finds. Already, world stock markets in many senses reflect indicators for where people focus their attention.

Prospect #2: Schwartz also cites *entertainment*; reflecting our need for survival components *identity, community* and *belief*. I'm convinced that part of the solution to infoglut and the Myth of Interactivity will be to collect monies from people who send messages requesting response... a kind of bid/ask market for personal attention. This follows the hallowed supply and demand metaphor for market decisions: people who receive widespread attention will probably charge more to return attention by responding, thus preserving an ecology of attention. Already precedents have been set by telephone practices... Groups like *Private Citizen* have sued and won the right to let individuals charge telemarketing groups for bothering them with unsolicited calls. Also, phone-sex businesses let people trade attention from others for beaucoup cash.

Prospect #3: Collectives of people working, talking online provide sources of meaning, points of access for understanding, more dynamic than any libraries. Zuboff notes:

"Organizational theorists frequently have promoted a conception of organizations as 'interpretation systems.' The computer mediation of an organizations' productive and administrative infrastructure places an even greater premium upon an organizations' interpretive capabilities..."

As Scotto eluded in *FWR #1*, virtual communities provide attractors for ideas; I envision a near-future scenario where online communities — e.g. email lists and conferences — operate as business co-operatives; customers approach with proposals and questions which the collective then discusses to delve meaning based on internal memetic activity. Customers pay fees for attention given them, from which individual memebers in return draw income.

The *Eight Circuit Model* offers an intriguing implication... Thanks to our neocortex brain goo, we can manipulate our bodies within time. The number of dimensions an organism experiences as the brain goo gathers layers: sea-born amoebas probably don't experience *space*, reptiles probably don't experience *time*. Moving into Circuit #5, #6, etc., activations, we come to experience even more complex dimensions, e.g. *information*.

Also note that survival components: **raw materials, shelter, identity, community, belief**, etc., can all be exchanged — *manipulated over time within the meta-organism* — by an abstraction we call *money*.
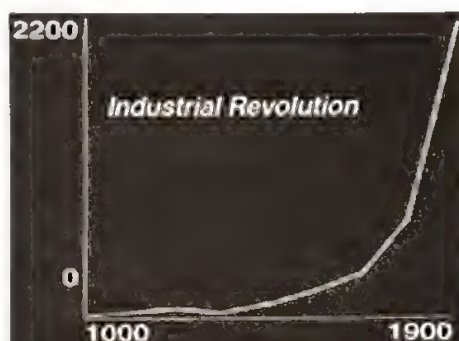
Growth of the Information Economy parallels the Industrial Revolution. First graph shows the "number of important inventions and discoveries" during the period 1000-1900 c.e. — a detailed copy can be found in Neuropolitics, Timothy Leary, Starseed 1977, ISBN 0-915238-18-7, p.173. Second graph shows the "number of Internet hosts, worldwide" during the period 1982-1992 c.e. — a detailed copy can be found in Matrix News, v.2 n.7, MIDS 1992, ISSN 1059-0749, p.6.
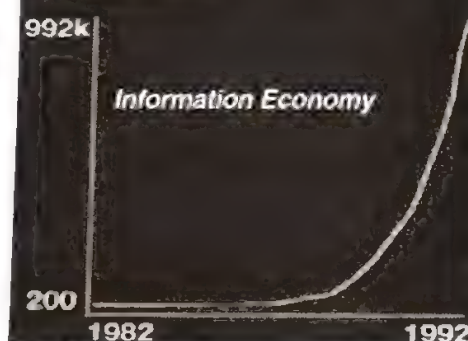
In all the papers, talks, proposals, panels discussions and whatnot for architecting VR systems and cyberspace I've ever seen, there has never been has any mention of the state variable called *Desire*. It is solely the domain of Desire, ultimately, to change reality. Desire accounts for whatever we do beyond the basic needs for survival.

To reformulate the notion of an Information Economy, to understand the role we play as humans within a cyborganic meta-organism bent on evolving toward higher orders of dimensional freedom, *to seek new means for hunting/gathering our survival components, particularly money*, let me suggest an exercise in recombinant memetic engineering: recall that Desire integrated over Time is precisely attention... Access everything you can find about Finance, about Economics, substitute the word "cash" with the word "attention", then read and disseminate the results. ⅛'

Circuit #1: Bio-Survival Stages — Amphibian survival on land. First circuit to evolve and first activated at birth, handling the trigger mechanisms of flee/feed/fight/fuck. Represents forward/backward movement in space; may be accessed through tobacco or heroin.

Circuit #2: Terrestrial Mammalian Stages — Hunter-Gatherer animals. Emotional mechanisms for defining territory. Represents up/down movement in space; may be accessed through alcohol.

Circuit #3: Symbolic Tool Stage — Tribal behaviors. Dexterity and linear-logical functions that differentiate humans from other primates. Represents right/left moment, full 3-D spatiality; may be accessed through caffeine or cocaine.

Circuit #4: Industrial — Feudalism developed into Multinational Corporations. Collectivism and sociosexual controls to transmit culture through generations. Represents movement in 4-D time; may be accessed through sex hormones.
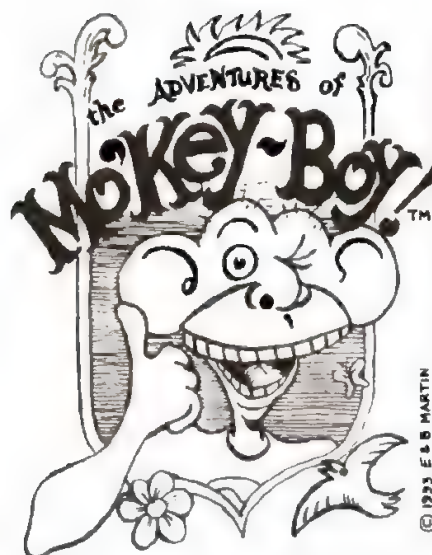
Circuit #5: Cyber-Somatic Piloting Sensory Info — Individual belief maintenance. Individualism, "right-brain" activity, hedonistic "turn-ons". Transcends linearity, gravity. Represents movement in 5-D information; may be accessed through marijuana.

Circuit #6: Cyber-Electronic Piloting Quantum Electronic Info — Individual mediation of neurological events. Metaprogramming, virtual reality, telepathy and transpersonal intelligence. Addresses singularity/multiplicity; may be accessed through psychedelics.

Circuit #7: Cyber-Genetic Piloting DNA/RNA Data — Genetic Technology. Access to collective consciousness; may be accessed through LSD.

Circuit #8: Cyber-Nano-Tech Piloting Atomic Info — Nanotechnology. "Extraterrestrial" experience; may be accessed through DMT and ketamine.

Descriptions have been adapted from Leary along with Robert Anton Wilson's commentary from Prometheus Rising. Leary summarizes: "There are other levels of reality beyond the socially conditioned."

freedom

..by *Mark Pesce*, Network Zero, mpesce@netcom.com

Marshall McLuhan, in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, predicted a startling future for our electronic technologies: "In much the same way that gas, water, and electricity are piped into the household, we are rapidly approaching a time when consciousness will also be brought into the house..."

The all too obvious convergence between *holosthetic* technologies and the geometric, rhyzomic growth of digital networks of communication implies that soon we will indeed be able to pipe a "consciousness" into the household; **the implications of this will be bounded primarily by the technology found within the household, not by the information carriers.**

The price we pay for allowing a technology into our lives is allowing ourselves to be shaped to the demands of the technology itself. Technologies have been called **value-neutral**; this is perhaps imprecise. The actual construction of a technology embodies a mythology, or *ontology* — literally a definition of the place of "self" within the technology. The telephone, for example, places the self into an aural, auditory, dimensionless space where everything converges on a single point: the eardrum. It is impossible to develop a sense of distance while using a telephone: *everything* is immediately present. Even the device itself — as Heidegger and Ronel have shown — has an imperative. To answer the phone is to acquiesce, in advance, to any request made through it.

I have discussed the ontological dimensions of holosthetic technology in a previous work, which can be distilled down to: **the creation of a world necessarily implies the creation of a world-view.** Once understood, an entire system for discussing this ontology becomes obvious. *To abstract between virtual and real worlds is fallacious.* The language of world-views used in archaic mythology or the Enlightenment or quantum physics must be incorporated into the holosthetic construction, as it is, albeit unconsciously, in our daily lives.

Another issue which becomes clear as the Net grows in its inimitable, *organic* fashion, is the question of the preservation of human rights in cyberspace. When networking was in its infancy, the ontological dimensions of cyberspace were poorly understood. It was seen that we would be spending time there, "inhabiting" a construction of reality which could arbitrarily be anarchic or fascistic. In any case, it would be plastic to the imposition of any ontology, whether personal or social. It is precisely because ontological form of a technology follows its design that these concerns are of immediate import.

Design of the network is well underway, several essential features, however, must still be incorporated to satisfy basic requirements for safety and democracy within cyberspace: *secure transactions, authentication,* and *many-to-many* or *multicast networking*. As human consciousness ventures into cyberspace, real issues of safety emerge. Just as we don't allow lunatics to wander across highways, we won't allow citizens of cyberspace to commit holosthetic suicide or murder. *Telepathology,* the expression of sociopathology from a distance, is one such danger. Being most effective when the greatest amount is known about the subject(s) of an attack, secure transactions will at least make it difficult to gather information about a potential victim.

Much has been said on the subject of privacy rights, and about a government's provisional right to invade privacy — to protect the rights of other citizens. These same arguments are now used to prevent widespread implementation and adoption of cryptographically secure transactions. Refuting this is simple: **any cryptography which can be broken by the government can be broken, perhaps even easily, by someone else.** Either we will have privacy or we will not. If we suspend privacy rights, suspension must be complete, universal; a government must not hide secrets from its populace any more than citizens can hide secrets from their government.

However, private mind and private life are perhaps so important to ourselves and our identity as human beings that we would opt for complete privacy, a privilege entwined with awesome responsibility — *the policing of ourselves in cyberspace.*

In order to police ourselves, only one mechanism is necessary: *transaction authentication.* Once we can securely identify the agent(s) involved

in a transaction, we can develop models of
"trust" on which we can rely, much as in phys-
ical reality. No mechanism for secure transac-
tion authentication is theoretically bullet-proof,
so we need a continuous, competitive evolution
in cryptographic systems, with stated goals of
preserving liberty and freedom in cyberspace.
These are noble, national, even global goals,
ones which are perhaps the core defense in-
dustries of the twenty-first century.

able to "reach us", exposing us to their own
personal arts and wonders in unprecedented
numbers. If we neglect to design our networks
for multicasting, this will be impossible.

The second reason is precautionary, address-
ing the potential abuse of holosthetic technolo-
gy to persuade or brainwash. If adages about
the corruption of absolute power hold even
moderately true, we must protect our selves
from omnipresent influences in cyberspace.

The creation of a world necessarily implies the creation of a world-view.

Finally, we must foment a subtle paradigm shift
in the design and evolution of our networks.
Historically, this technology advanced along
two extremes: *bilateral conversation* and *broad-
casting*. If one envisions these as the ends of a
dial, the range in-between could be thought of
as many-to-many or multicast communications.
More than a party line, multicast provides a
"space" within the network bandwidth for the
expression of shared events and other informa-
tion. Each node is coequal to every other node:
the keys to reaching one or one hundred million
other people are equally available. This repre-
sents an inversion of concepts implicit in both
telephone and television: both technologies col-

Except in cases of extreme emergency, broad-
casting should be prohibited across the Net.
Open-loop communication without the sta-
bility of feedback presents a highly pathogen-
ic influence on human consciousness within
cyberspace. Only the most serious issues of
public safety merit such an intrusion into an
essentially personal space. An organization such
as the Emergency Broadcast System will be a
necessary fixture in cyberspace, and should be
the only body technically able to broadcast
throughout the Net.

If these technologies are incorporated into the
infrastructure of the Net with the same regard
that power utilities deliver line voltage and

These are noble, national, even global goals, ones which are perhaps the core defense industries of the twenty-first century.

lapse into a hybrid medium unlike either of its
forebears. This event is *preventable*; we might
engineer our networks to conform to old styles
of bilateral conversation and broadcast, but
there are a several reasons for avoiding that
scenario.

The first is primarily creative, since it is enor-
mously beneficial for us to be able to work
collaboratively, for the development of artistic
projects, for government by and for the people,
for business endeavors, etc. People would be

frequency, i.e. in a standardized, ubiquitous
manner, we will be able to develop mecha-
nisms to ensure that Privacy and Private Mind
are not violated by our entry into cyberspace.
Without these safeguards, a full range of hu-
man pathology, from suicide to terrorism will
find room enough to express itself in our pri-
vate mind, irrespective of any choice we may
make to take in or filter out. ⅛²

correspondence

does post-socialism equal pre-tofflerism?

..by Daniel Molnar,
JZA3001@HUSZEG11.BITNET, Eastern
Europe Correspondent

HUNGARY — a state in Eastern Europe, emerging from Orwell's "all animals are equal, but some animal are more equal than others" perhaps to Toffler's *Power Shift* where "knowledge is power". Socialism is a thing of past, capitalism is a thing of future. Two million people (a fifth of the population) cannot even earn a basic living, and few executives boast of a portable phone, a luxury car or flat. Not much money for culture, arts and education.

However, *information culture* presents a very new side of things for Hungary. There are a lot of micros in the country, but for example you cannot experience the Net at high schools. Wages for a newly graduated doctor or teacher are about at subsistence level if he/she works in a state institution. To survive and live well, one must undertake an enterprise. So supposing you've come from a university, you've experienced the Net... there's the opportunity for you.

First of all, Internet use is not wide-spread in Hungary, because there are no access providers except for the universities — where most all students are entitled to get an email address. The best opportunity for starting a business would be to sell Internet access for the public. A growing number of people have started running BBS's for information and databases which can be accessed via the Net. Some of these provide shareware, sometimes cracked wares, etc. Others offer online business information from within the country or abroad; new enterprises and businesspeople find they need *much* more data now than in the socialist era.

For an example, recently the Hungarian Department of Interior bought a leading modem... The people responsible for installing it charged a phone bill of about 3 million forints (US$37,500) in one month. They've been fired, sure, but now earn a living off their own BBS — which contains data they collected during that windfall month.

Trading companies will soon recognize email as a new means of transacting business correspondence inexpensively. I think they'll employ university students as the cheapest labor for translating and transferring letters, given the students' free Net access. This process should accelerate transactions and business negotiations — not to mention the possibility of employing Internet Relay Chat [*ed. note: Americans have little appreciation of the quality and value of domestic telephone service and common language demographics, hence fail to understand why Europeans might prefer email over voice*].

In the not too distant future, email-based shopping could become common, with both seller and customer connected on the Net — as FringeWare does now — probably beginning with computer accessories. Artists, writers and musicians aren't excluded from this growing online world: GIFs, MIDs, WAVs and DOCs are possible to post with UUENCODE in email messages *now*, so if you have a digitizer or sampler you can send a portfolio to magazines, art galleries or publishers via the Net [*ed. note: Americans generally don't recognize domestic postal service as one of the cheapest in the world; even postage abroad can be prohibitive*].

Because of local conditions, generally only the university students become acquainted with this kind of information culture. Some will be enticed to help form partnerships according to the local maxim "invent and invest": a just-graduated commercial triase consisting of a

researcher, an economist and a lawyer could center on the Net for operating a mini enterprise with access to global resources. Other graduates who cannot undertake their own enterprise won't want to forsake the information flows they've come to enjoy... The new set of intellectuals will eventually force employers to adopt the Net as a new way of communication.

The Net will be THE new trademarket, but this underscores the necessity for a standard of value or "money" in the virtual world. What could that be? Probably "virtual" credit cards which have total accessibility to users on the Net, before long [*ed's note: MasterCard seems to lead for global acceptance...*]

Hopefully, we will be able to pay for virtual goods by virtual cheque in a virtual shop in not much longer of a virtual time. ½⁶'

hacking at the end of the universe

..by Nimrod Shabtal Kerrett (Abu-Zeresh),
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Correspondent on assignment to Holland

"A Techno-Anarchist Convention" - August 3-6, Larserbors, HOLLAND. The announcement in Computer Underground Digest committed its viral act, erasing all the neatly ordered schedule entries for the first week of August from my old, grey memory cells, to be replaced by a neon light flashing "You deserve a vacation in Holland." Away we went...

Most of us European/Third-World dwellers don't get to see much of the physical manifestations of Gibson's self-executing prophecies. OK. The Matrix is there, but to witness street-culture one must live in San Francisco or somesuch. HEU — *Hacking at the End of the Universe* — looked like the only chance to surface on the physical side of a phone plug and experience cyber-culture in form of faces, fashion and body-lang. How naive I was to presume this. Compared to most of the kids there, *I looked dangerous* (a timid, Swiss-bank sysadmin)... But don't get me wrong, I *DID* have fun — failing to do so in Holland requires quite a unique body-chemistry — *but I had a nagging feeling that European hackers still live in the Seventies.*

Try being less techno and more anarchist.

FIRST, A FEW POSITIVE NOTES

The most important lecture addressed electronic money. I won't go into *sci.crypt-style* details, but this was the most exciting thing I've ever heard since public-keys were first explained to me. The president of a Dutch firm called *Digi-Cash* described a crypto scheme where a bank can issue electronic credit-certificates which can't be forged, and yet are immune to *traffic analysis*. Their *digital cash* is just like physpace cash: *it has no smell.* You get a "virtual $100 bill

from the bank that you can't forge or spend more than once, and which the bank can't trace — e.g. to the specific person who requested it.

Ever since society devolved from cash to credit cards, people have become used to the idea that our shopping-histories are readily subject to electronic surveillance. At HEU I learned this was all hype: we CAN evolve economic systems to enjoy advantages of digital communication without sacrificing our privacy.

Another interesting issue was a lecture by an ex-CIA executive who went private [ed. note: positively identified as a net.personality on the WELL] and now tries to preach for open-source approaches: instead of creating your own locks and picking the ones of your neighbour, the idea is to use information-gathering/analysis techniques — *one of those things in which "intelligence" bodies specialize* — to derive content from the info-swamp we seem to be sucked into... and then sell it. This guy made arguments similar to what Barlow said before the hush-hush community a few months ago, but seems to refocus everything on enterprise. Mighty exciting. BTW, I've noticed how the concept of *profit* makes bleeding-heart European anarchist types wince...

The network built on-site also impressed me. In a campground setting, subject to occasional rainstorms, they erected three LANS connecting nearly 100 computers of all sizes and shapes, plus terminal servers for the Etherless.

Computers were placed in our private tents, and the field bloomed with PC/XTs-turned-repeaters covered in wet plastic sheets. This monstrosity connected to the Internet over three shaky SLIP dial-up lines and it actually WORKED—it cost some sleepless 36 hours, but still, WOW.

Most of the hackers I met at HEU fell under the second definition. I was even scolded for using "Wintendo" and wasting the precious power of my 486 notebook. Let's start with the local network — having all the tents connected was a wonderful idea, and symbolized *constructive*

I had a nagging feeling that European hackers still live in the Seventies.

techno-anarchy. Unfortunately it lacked cultural content. To begin with, you had to login as a guest — *if* you'd figured out the IP number of a server working at the moment. You had no identity handle, so there was no use in talking about site-specific newsgroup for follow-ups on topics. Even local email was impossible; to whom would you email? Since everyone got a badge on entrance, why didn't we also receive user-ids, perhaps written on the badges? Even administrative announcements (e.g. schedule changes) were only available on a PHYSICAL bulletin-board in the bar... ever tried to scan manually over 200 paper scraps?

Another side effect was that to justify dragging your portable all the way to Holland, you just HAD to hog the SLIP lines and telnet outside, which made life hard for all of us, but much harder for the networking crew. In my humble opinion, excessive telneting is like saying "Nothing to do here, let's try somewhere else." I *LIVE* somewhere else; I took a plane in order to check out *THIS* place. Telneting was also a problem since the IP-resolving system didn't work and we had to apply hacking techniques to find the IP numbers back home.

The most frustrating thing was the social/political discussions. In a discussion titled "Networking For The Masses" someone dared suggest user-friendliness as a key to resolving computer illiteracy. "No shit, Sherlock" — I hear you mumble. Well, here's how another panel-member replied: "A revolution is not a user-friendly thing. Activists shouldn't count on the computer community to make stuff eas-

ier for them". Watch out, masses... prepare for *computer military-training* once the Revolution is over.

Let's take another trendy political subject — *cryptography.* One would assume that any techno-anarchist convention in '93 would feature a nice level of heated, political, crypto-discussion. Well, *nada.* The only crypto-related subject was the "electronic cash" mentioned above. Although it's quite exciting for the crypto-enlightened, 90% of the HEU audience lost contact after the first three cube-roots, returning to their tents to telnet elsewhere. I was left in a small group of highly-technical Cypherpunks who didn't give a fork whether New Delhi housewives would ever understand the switches of PGP; they seem to *ENJOY* their wizardly "elite" status.

Even in discussions about hacker-paranoia, the audience disliked the idea of demystifiyng the almighty-hacker image to make your average, trigger-happy policeman relax a bit. Does Europe need an equivalent of USA's "Operation Sun-Devil" to knock sense into its collective skulls? FTP to *ftp.eff.org:/pub/cud/papers/crime.puzzle* to learn from the bitter experience of others (*I don't know the IP number!*).

Ep-Travel-Log

Before the convention, I naively believed that at least the *HACKERS* could Read the Writing on the Wall... Since I'm sober now, I'll spell it out for you:

When the world finally adopts strong public-key cryptography (I hope it does, since I've seen too many wars and and acts of human-rights infringement in my life), two things will become virtually impossible: 1) *seeing* what you're not supposed to see; and 2) *changing* what you're not supposed to change, unless you want to cause brute-force damage.

These two anachronistic activities represent the basis for most *hacker-culture* I encountered at HEU — so my advice is: *switch to the first dictionary-definition of "Hacker".* Try being less techno and more anarchist. There's a revolution going on... in case you've missed out on some Usenet recently. ⅛²

Photos: Author, complete with notebook and a tent; Emmanuel Goldstein giving fashion advice; Dazed and Confused star Weevil hangs with Emmanuel...

aleph-1 breeds

fixion

..by Scotto, scotto@penguin.gatech.edu

INTERNET, 1993 — At first, the email community called *Aleph* was intended to be a forum in which Australian net.weaver Mitchell Porter could kludge together a Theory of Everything. Initial weeks were characterized by an amazing maelstrom of memetic, Qabbalistic, metaphysical mindspew. But lately, Aleph has settled into a groove, and that groove is called *FIXION*.

What is FIXION? Tod Foley, Aleph's resident archivist/Qabbalist, raves "FIXION is the world's first *Post-Relativistic, Multi-Linear, Pan-Disciplinary, Bimodally-Functional, Trans-Existential, Non-Local, Electro-Literary Performance Art/ Spectator Sport/Role-Playing Game/PsychoTechnique.*"

In slightly simpler terms, FIXION is a collaborative text-originated work of art, potentially spanning several different media, that was originally intended to "test the possibility of changing reality through fiction." The "FIX" stands for *Fictual/Interactive/eXpressive*, and FIXION itself balances out the other main threads on Aleph (which include Ontological, Fluxual, Ambiknostic, and eXegesisive, among other things).

As of this writing, the various currents within FIXION, feature the development of a dreaming AI, the formation of a *Nexus Network* across the nation, and the experiments of a band of DreamHunters who discover a Lost City in each other's dreams. All a new FIXIONeer has to do is read up a bit on what's already established, and then plunge in from any angle. Characters and settings are often shared by various FIXIONeers, and major plot thrusts and twists are often discussed publicly on the list.

Naturally the aesthetic of FIXION as a whole is quite unique. FIXIONeer free agent .rez says, "It should be impossible to tell whether its cyberpunk fiction, science fiction, mystery, drama, comedy, or mystical treatise, simply because it can be all of those, depending on the desires of any given writer."

From a sheerly artistic standpoint, then, the work is certainly intriguing; but also inherent in the structure of FIXION, at least in the eyes of many Alephians, is the notion of auto.prophecy—creating self-fulfilling prophecies strong enough to alter the future. Somehow, the memes and thrusts embodied in FIXION are intended to spill over into reality. How that will happen is anybody's guess, considering the FIXION time line includes an inter-

dimensionary rift in 1997, and of course, a McKenna-style *Singularity* in 2012.

To become a FIXIONeer, or to be a part of the ongoing ontological flux, subscribe to Aleph at *aleph-request@pyramid.com*. Foley maintains an extensive archive, covering not only FIXION but also the esoteric far reaches of Aleph, enough arcania to swell any respectable reading list. After that, expect a fair amount of scrutiny along with a fair amount of praise; what's most important about the project is the artistic community building.

As Foley says, "I tend to think of it [Aleph] as an eclectic memetic **band**, a traveling **fusion ensemble**, complete with riffs, chops, hooks & schticks, slick-but-solid bass lines and wandering-but-resolving lead improvisations, blazing musicians and wizard technicians, performance artists and assorted entourage, with its own revolutionary online musicological research institute." ⅙

Where Is Thomas Pynchon?

strands of the Chord

..by t. Winter-Damon & Don Webb, 0004200716@mcimall.com

I can think now. They're only monitoring the Skimmer with remote satellites. A century ago there was something called *television*. Television destroyed personal grounding. Personal experience died. People no longer felt anything. People would go to the Grand Canyon. No gasps of awe. Nothing. They had to have four hours a day of sitting in front of a flickering tube. Hypnotic trance addiction. Maintained by 25,000 volts of red, blue, and green aimed directly at their retinas 30 times a second. According to Yage Tomas, technosociologist, that's why the Quick Thaw occurred. The zombies didn't care. The corporations that survived outlawed television so the problem couldn't recur. That's why they have me. No more passive hypno-time. They hurt when I hurt, they share my sex life, they get real personal experience to keep their twenty-first century brains from going maggoty with boredom.

POV: TRACKING SHOT: MAGNIFICATION (x1):

The dragonfly cabinshroud & fuselage of a British Optika XV flashes through the visible for a split second, limed against crimson flames of desert sunset as its mimetic syntho-chromatophores flicker into altered masking patterns...

The game grows most dangerous at sunrise & sunset. & risk-factor graphing almost vertically, an axiom of Smugglers' Blues that every kamikaze Skimmer knows...

Deep purple of an upthrust jut of basalt peak, jagged ravine lines darker, almost black...

Dust swirls across the barren plane below. So close that Festrir turbine-jockey with his bug-eye view of terrain must hear the grating, sandblast patter on his near 360° peripheral of waferthin Neo-Lexan...

POV: WIDE ANGLE: MAGNIFICATION (x5):

Nomad Country. The Defoliated Lands. Erosion-ravaged sweep of Arizona desert, dead as the airless surface of the moon, stripped totally of even the most rudimentary vegetation by the zaibatsu-merc striketeams up across The Wall from the Corporate States of Latino-Am. Twenty-seven years ago May fifth. Nuevo Cinco de Mayo. Macro-Orange blown out in a computer-sequenced network of timed charges, clearing a buffer zone of brutally inhospitable terrain to slow the southward migration of illegal workers...

The constant *whup whup* of wind turbines echoes out across the plain, hollow blades of fiberglass whipflexing in their endless rotations... Supported on two-hundred-&-fifty-foot pylons of titanium-steel. Generating, collectively, a billion kilowatts-per-diem. Bled off through subterranean conduits to the energy-hungry dilettantes & wastrels of far-off San Andreas City & the sprawl of New Babylon...

& the iron crosses that seem to quiver with the heatwaves rising from their pitted frames. Each bearing the rivet-pinioned remains of wayfarers, reduced by Deconstructionist artists to their intrinsic meaninglessness of bleached bones & tattered rinds of desiccated flesh... whispering their deathsongs to the fevered winds...

POV: TRACKING CLOSEUP OF SKIMMER'S PROJECTED FLIGHT PATH: MAGNIFICATION (x25):

The audio monitors pick up the muffled, five-blade turbine's *whooshing* growl above the keening of desolation's prevailing winds...

Again the shimmering, mimetics failing to pace anomalies of rapidly shifting skyline & terrain below: horizon's crimson streaked with tattered strands of saffron/tangerine/cobalt/black/amethyst, flaking scales of six-lane tarmac exposed randomly where the winds have scattered away the sand, like the sloughed skin of some mythic World Serpent — discarded dermal offcasts of Quetzalcoatl or Jormungandr...

Air sizzles & shrieks with CPB pulses. Excited molecules of superheated silica & calcium carbonate & ferrous oxide & all the traces present in sandy topsoil slag & frag with ear-shattering detonations as underlying crust of caliche explodes with the violence of vaporized ground-moisture's expansion/evacuation...

Corporate orbitals' remotes have made the Skimmer, the intruder on DMZ border-turf...

He's close to his destination, a Stone Cold Hive recently subverted to robotics production by a Nippo-Tibetan syndicate. They're re-arming.

Charged-particle beam projectors strafe the desert floor from their godheads'-vantage of exo-stratospheric slow-spin... Pemex...? Mitsubishi...? Toshiba...? Braun...? Vatican...?

Making is not the visual shift of the synthochromatophores but the faltering reactions of surface-temperature-mimetics of the hull (programmed to scramble the scan of infrareds), hexed as the Skimmer passes over jumble of exposed asphalt & crumbling ruins & twisted wrecks of rusted automotive derelicts, radiating white/red/yellow with blue weblines in the blastfurnace of desert sun, & half-clogged shafts of subterranean tunnels breathing updrafts of magenta/black...

The turbine gives out a deathwail of groaning, whining torment. Not *impacted* by a charged beam. No explosion of superheated metal... Perhaps fragged chunks of slagged sand inducted with the airflow, chewing hell out of whirling bladespin vanes...?

The tortured shriek echoes to silence.

The only sound the rush of planing windflow over airfoils.

Eleven-to-one glide ratio carries the wounded Skimmer over half a mile, even though its surface-hugging flight pattern held it at an altitude of only two-hundred-plus feet above the desert terrain... ...before the extended struts of its landing gear are sheared off by an upthrust girder of rust-encrusted iron protruding from the shattered carcass of a service station... (?) shopping mall... (?) motel... (?) ...The pilot bellies out the Skimmer in a clearing of hard-

> "They were on the net living my life. My kill-thrill of cutting them to pieces."

packed desert floor uncluttered by major remnants of debris. Its forward-surging impetus ploughs a ragged trench, dust boiling around the friction grinding, tortured screech of the fuselage as superheated metal shavings pare away in a showered sparkstream, & the outer skin of the hull buckles & warps at the violence of impact...

The dust clouds quaver in midair, swirl into wispish arabesques, & are whipped away grain by grain in the sandblast of prevailing winds...

Silence settles over the bulk of the wreckage, half-embedded in the sand & dust. The only sounds: the chords of winds' moaning deathsongs echoing among the tattered strands of

crucified flesh, & the *whup whup whup* of whip-flexing blades of fiberglass, pinwheeling endlessly from the skyrearing shafts of metal towers…

POV: TARGETING CLOSEUP OF WRECKAGE: MAGNIFICATION (x100):

Cockpit door hinges slowly open. Cloaked & hooded pilot clambers through hatch. Staggering slightly as he exits…

DISSOLVE TO: CHRONO-SEQUENCE TO: (REWIND/FLASHBACK LAST 313 SECONDS): POV: SCANNING THROUGH FIXED PERSPECTIVE: ORBITS OF FESTRIR'S SKULL: MAGNIFICATION (x1): CHRONO-SEQUENCE: RESUME TIMEFLOW IN SLO-MO: (1/2 NORMAL SPEED):

Terrain rushes forward. Swells to fill full range of vision. Teetering wildly…

Bone-jarring IMPACT. Semifluid human body-bag of blood/flesh/musculature/bone-structure brutally slamdanced in straining confines of nylon harness…

TEMPORARY FADE TO BLACK: POV: SLOWLY RESOLVE FOCUS: CLOSEUP THROUGH FIXED PERSPECTIVE: ORBITS OF FESTRIR'S SKULL: MAGNIFICATION: (x2): NO PERSONALITY INTERFACE: CHRONO-SEQUENCE: RESUME TIMEFLOW IN SLO-MO: (1/3 NORMAL)

Matte-black, gauntleted right hand flexes open & extends forefinger to punch up *vitals* on left wrist's bare flesh-implanted biomed monitors. LED readouts flash cyber-crimson. EEG's & EKG's strobe on-line. Blood pressure. Pulse. & other assorted biorhythms…

Pilot Festrir digs into folds of cloak. Retrieves Roche EmergiPac of rolled derms. Selects carefully the indicated drugs & dosages. Adrenal corticosteroid. Epinephrine & serotonin analogs. & a broad spectrum antibiotic as a prophylactic…

All skillfully applied in left arm's bare inner crook of elbow or just posterior to lobe of right ear…

"Layin' on hands" in the layman's lingo, quasi-religious ref's symptomatic of the unwashed masses' near-superstitious awe of SOTA medtech…

Pilot inserts fiber-optic lead-plug into jack at lower left segment of skull…

Punches in feedback to submicro VSS-recorder.

MERGE PERSONALITIES WITH FESTRIR:

You unfasten the restrictive webwork of harness. Feel the adrenaline surge as epinephrine analog hits system. *Yeah. thank your choice of deities for the visionary sonofabitch that invested the*

Optika with a nine-G-impact-sustaining cabin shroud! The integrated "rollbar" structure of the cockpit just saved your charmed (?) cursed (?) silver-spoon-inserted-sphincter…!

You rummage among your weaponry & stash of survivalist essentials. You select a carbon-steel sniper's crossbow, laser-scoped, & a quiver's worth of specialized quarrels for your left hip, & an even score of standard-issue curare darts for your right. You sling the bow across your back. Then pick up a Luigi Franchi SPAS Model 12: an eight round semi-auto twelve-gauge shotgun, short-barreled & pistol-gripped, with a folding butt/shoulder-hook, light alloy receiver, chrome-hardened barrel & gas cylinder. One mean-ass little one-hand SG. With all externals sand-blasted & phosphated black…

You discard the optional "shot spreader" as deadweight. You decide the grenade launching attachment is mandatory, unknowns of possible opposition considered. The one-hundred-fifty-meter range of the launcher can be a heavy plus in this rugged terrain…

& you pocket a versatile selection of ammo: buckshot, solid slug, tear gas, & grenades. You chamber eight rounds of plastic-cylindered CS gas. Your prime intent is as a flushing tool. You prefer the deathrush of the crossbow. But pleasure isn't everything. You're a survivor because of practical considerations. & a positive genius for tactical encounters that is… (*shall we say: "superhuman"*…?)

You already carry your needlegun. As always, shoulder-holstered. & the boot-sheathed stiletto is also *regulation*…

POV: CONTINUITY PATCH EXPOSITION/INTROSPECTION: (SYSOP — IS HE CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE HIVE TO MAKE IT?) TRACKING: AFF

free agent.
o u t l a w . .
m e r c . . .

With a zaibatsu-issued bounty on your head. Open season target of damn near every corporate ninja on the globe (or off-planet).

You're just back from a whirlwind tour of Amritsar & beautiful downtown Calcutta — killing greenskins in the ruins of Dum Dum International Airport & filling your attache' with some of the weirdest, most marketable biosofts on the planet.

YOU ARE FESTRIR, THE ONE KNOWN AS "THE DARK JUGGLER" & "JOKERMAN"

You've just returned to Amerika. Following a string of three separate-but-related hired-terrorist torture/murders of the wives & children of East Indian zaibatsumen…

The concave surface of the cockpit window reflects a suitably distorted image of your face (*EDIT EDIT EDIT SYSOP — CUT OUT THAT SCARRED MESS. INITIATE IMAGE TAPE FACE WITH SUBLIMS*)

An image calculatingly borrowed from a pulp-fiction archetype: "Dr. Doom" / "Abominable Dr. Phibes" / "Darkside" / "Darth Vader"; the inscrutable, half-human/half-cyber villain of our darkest subconscious fantasies, whose transcendent EVIL is only vaguely hinted in pale echoes of seriocomic suggestion…

A masque played out behind the matte-black curves of nihilistic facial image, the hooded cloak of the crazed monarch of ritual assassins…

The ruin of your face masked by matte-black curves of virtually indestructible, third-generation, NASA-developed linear polymer, & a mirror-glazed convex lens and your one blue organic eye with a link on its optic nerve…

(EDIT EDIT EDIT RETURN TO POV) POV: MERGE WITH FESTRIR

You exit the crippled Skimmer. Scan the landscape. *Nothing yet.* But your gut-level instincts *vibe* that you'll have company. & soon… From among the rubble. From the rat-warren mouths of those abandoned (but not *uninhabited*) laserbore subway tunnels that surround you. Somewhere beneath this chaos the Hive…

(the tattered strands of deathchord that echo the whispers of the wind betray their nearby presence)

POV: SCANNING TERRAIN FROM FIXED PERSPECTIVE: THE ORBITS OF FESTRIR'S SKULL: MAGNIFICATION (x15):

This is Stone Cold's turf. The ratboys of the burrows sure as fuck are gonna show. Lookin' for fresh meat to rivet to their crosses.

POV: MERGE WITH FESTRIR:

& a few well-placed teargas cylinders shot down nearby shafts should help *you* call it on your own terms…

You fire from the hip. The satisfying recoil of the Luigi Franchi is a sudden spasm of pleasure. The echoes of their discharge *cracking* again & again through the chaotic angles of ruined concrete & steel. The puffs of liberated CS flushing the brush for live ones…
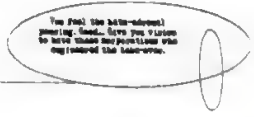
Gotta play the game by the rules

You lay the attache' case crammed with the illicit goodies on the sand in front of you. The stakes are high. The contents of the case can command a minimum haul of fifty times their weight in gold or platinum. *No credits too easy to trace down to their user...* You barter for universal currency....

You know that the QUICK THAW OF NINETY-NINE was no accident. The balance of power shifted to the Third World & the multinationals. No accidental wars. You feel the hate-adrenal pouring. Good. It will make you sharp. Give you vision to hate those corporations who engineered the take-over. Those corporations whose real estate was not effected.

This area is too clean. The scorpion boys and the Stone Colds have picked sun-bleached bones of techno-corpses for the semiconductors & precious metals & rare antiques & whatever other salvage surfaced.   rare

& the Stone Colds scuttle from their gassed burrows. Spiked hair twisted into mondo-bizarro crests that resemble nothing so much as those hideous dayglo-airbrushed coral-clump fragments that *tourista* fleecing hucksters used to hawk from those roadside SEA SHELL shacks all along both coasts...

You've already slung the Luigi by its butt stock/shoulder-hook from the muscle-rippled ridgeline of your left clavicle & scapula. & the carbon-steel of the crossbow is bent into a tensed arc of deathpromise & knocked with a bladed quarrel —

The red pinpoint lance of the lasersight marks the bullseye of the closest Stone Cold's heart. He's drawing a bead on you for a leg-crippling shot with his cherished MAC 10. But you *know* he's ammo-hungry & each shot has gotta count. You can see the trickles of sweat muddying the dust-caked scars of his face. & you *squeeze* the trigger so expertly. The *twang* of the discharged bolt is like a split-second climax & your cock lurches in its leathers as you see the ratboy croak in bloodspattered (living?) color...

You break the butt of the bow with practiced ease, cocking it, another quarrel knocked with the sleight-of-hand reflexes that hint at your epithet of "Dark Juggler." An uneasy finger looses a stuttering volley from another MAC 10's stubby barrel. But the shots go wild. & your finger is stone-solid in its precision. You take this shrieking mutant through the forehead.

A chattering barrage of gunfire echoes all around you. But you stand your ground, unflinching...

& the opposition quickly dwindles. So you bait the rest from hiding with a possum game of deadly consequence: you seem to crumple to your knees, feigning a lethal hit, dropping the crossbow to the sand. They bite for it BIG TIME. & a trank grenade is in your hand & out before they know what hit them...

One of the Stone Colds is merely stunned, a rather handsome half Navajo youth of perhaps fifteen — perfect guide to the underworld. If you can get in, you can find your CONTACT, the woman with the disk. You check his neck for a jack & you find one. Pop open your attache' & dig out a particular biosoft you think may press this kid's buttons. You hold it over his jack & it squirms in like a caterpillar & his subconscious obviously kicks in, judging from certain visceral responses... It's built from an old *feely* — half your home audience has probably done (*EDIT EDIT EDIT cut, ou.* "*HOME AUDIENCE*" *REF, MAKE CONTINUITY PATCH*) the Eurasian virgin and three doctors. The Stone Cold has a stupid smile on his face. He knows he's stimulated but can't quite take it up to conscious level.

"Get up, Tonto. We're going to home base."

The kid stands up dreamy slow. If he's too slow the Stone Colds might be able to regroup behind you, but you can't trust him to be free.

You follow him into the laserbore subway tunnel. Pride of the 1990s. Graffiti older than your grandfather — following the rustedrails through the discarded clutter of *how many lives...?* Broken shards of plastic. TV consoles with smashed CRTs. PCs with their keyboards & touchpads a warped tangle of destruction. Baby Dolls with severed heads. Rotting clots of paper everywhere. The so-important gizmos of late Twentieth Century culture deconstructed into meaningless bits of chrome & gems & wiring. & everywhere the chunks & shards & cracked sheets of rainbow-coloredplastic...

Your guide walks to a carbonized section of tunnel & on through the wall. Most perfect holo you've ever seen. The Stone Colds had better techno-connections than your data had led you to believe. Once again your briefing tapes fail. Maybe your bosses don't trust you anymore. Maybe you'll kill them when this is over. Slice their pasty faces with the stream of needles. You pull the needle gun in anticipation of the pleasure. A smile tightens your ruined face. You follow through the wall, part of you — the remaining human flesh — cringing a little believing the evidence of your one organic eye. You're in a tiny warm dark corridor. A salty fetid smell comes in gusts from below. Adrenaline rush of panic. This is too small. You can't turn around. You're committed. Your grinning guide to the underworld stumbles forward. He feels safe. He's on his way to momma.

Click. Someone in front of you just cocked a weapon. No use pumping up the magnification. Happy boy's between you and him/her. Pull the trigger full back. The needles tear through happy boy hitting the target beyond. The target beyond fires his first gun too soon. He/she should've

waited till you'd cut a bigger hole in the kid. A few whitehot frags blossom through the opening kid. They miss your vitals cutburning into your flesh legs & screwing up some mid-section circuitry. The path is clear now & your needles rip your target apart. You force your way through the tunnel made slick with the kid's blood. AT LEAST HE DIED HAPPY — Your employers' slogan flashes green on your electronic eye. (*EDIT EDIT EDIT KILL REF "YOUR EMPLOYERS SLOGAN" MAKE CONTINUITY PATCH*)

A few meters more: five, ten, fifteen & you pass through another holo wall into a saffron-colored hexagonal hall. You're in the Stone Cold Hive now. Bugland. Abandon all *hope*.

You're supposed to meet a neutral. She's here selling viruses to the Stone Colds. She'll sell you the plans to the Hive. You run silent along the floor skidding on its waxy plastic. Should be here. Should be near. A section of wall slides open. CONTACT. Mary Denning stands there, full of desire. The mission is too tight to fulfill that. But there's always afterwards. She holds a microTempest disk in her right hand — a sonic stunner in her left.

POV: FIXED PERSPECTIVE: ORBITS OF FESTRIR'S SKULL: MAGNIFICATION (x2):

Mary Denning 2 meters tall, blonde hair, green-flecked brown eyes, muscular, wearing a one-piece white samite robe, Order of St. Tomas Arms Dealer, two knitting needles crossed over heart hypno-gem embeds in their pentagram heads.

POV: NONE — TRANSMISSION LOST (EDIT EDIT EDIT CUT IN SIMULATION UNTIL TRANSMISSION RE-ESTABLISHED. BEGIN RE-CONNECT SCAN)

"They're gonna hate you for doing that."

"Hello, Mary. How's tricks?"

The chamber smells of wax. Mary's beautiful as ever. She lays down the disk & gun & returns to her grosse-point. Needles pass effortlessly through the plastic mesh. Yarn describes a cool blue vortex to the center.

"You want to buy the disk now?"

"Later. When I'm broadcasting. The public lives for this stuff."

"Why'd you pull the cord?"

"I want out."

"Nobody wants out. Why pass up the chance to be superman?"

"I want out. Last week in Calcutta on a torturer/murder mission against more zaibatsumen I had to clean out a nest of greenskins. You know what they were doing while I cut them to

pieces? They were on the net living my life. My kill-thrill of cutting them to pieces."

"At least they died happy."

"If I hear that slogan again I'll puke. I'm getting feedback."

"That's a myth."

"You can't tell me that. When I stole the Skimmer — there was this chick, see — a zaibatsuman guard. I had her tranked. I was on my way to this beauty of an Optika when I hear the ghost voices: *take her take her take her.* I had my hands on the door of the Skimmer when an inversion hit. I was like somebody on the Net. I watched this body rape a dying woman."

"That's entertainment."

"Those are real people. Even greenskins are people. Of a sort."

Mary shrugs, "Dangerous words."

A green light goes on on my chest monitor. "What's that?"

"A message from my sponsor. If I don't resume transmission in thirty seconds they'll cut off my life support."

"I thought you were a free agent."

"I am. Life support controls are part of my contract."

"And you still want out."

"I still want out."

"O.K. lover what are you here for?"

"The Egg."

"There's a preThaw deadroom adjacent to it. Meet me there. Maybe I can help. By the way, is there sex-scene in this for me?"

"No"

"Damn"

POV: MERGE PERSONALITIES WITH FESTRIR (EDIT EDIT EDIT TO MEET CONTACT. CHRONO-SEQUENCE REGULAR)

You leap into the tiny chamber while CONTACT guards the hall. The door closes. She levels the sonic stunner at your crotch.

"What you got?"

You pull out a tiny radio made of living insect parts.

"So?"

"It's an important model if someone's metal shortage plans go through."

"You must want the Egg pretty bad."

You smile, "Let's say I'm a collector."

You hand her the radio. She hands you the disk. You pop it into your shoulder unit.

POV: CYBERSPACE

several windows down through spaghetti tunnels to the large green pixel cluster simple logic run creates a golden three-D clew

LOAD
POV: MERGE PERSONALITIES WITH FESTRIR:

"Good luck, Jokerman."

The door opens. You step into the hall laying down curare darts right and left. You fell three Cold Stoners. Stupid bastards. Two to the right. One to the left. You head right stepping over two dying bodies. Curare isn't a poison — technically — it's a muscle relaxant. Their lungs just relax. Takes three, maybe four minutes to die of oxygen depletion. You'd like to watch their eyes go out but you're in a hurry. Your computer-induced memory tells you the next hallway is a piece of cake. You only have to dodge twenty-three automatically triggered machine gun emplacements. The computer has loaded a dance in your mind. Let's pray to your choice of deities that it's the right one. Fire up the adrenals. Go.

POV: FIXED PERSPECTIVE: ORBITS OF FESTRIR'S SKULL: CHRONO-SEQUENCE SLO-MO 1/3 TIME: (THOUGHT FEELING MATRIX EXPANDED BY RE-DUBBING TO REQUIRED TIME LENGTH)

You leap. You somersault. You duck. You dive. You crawl. You feel hot metal passing centimeters above your back. It's over.

POV: MERGE PERSONALITIES WITH FESTRIR: CHRONO-SEQUENCE NORMAL:

You're at the first downshaft. Glittering stainless steel pipe with dark wire coil rungs. You check to see if it's empty. You begin your descent. After four meters the rungs begin to seem warm. You realize your mistake. The rungs are coils of nichrome wire with flexible fiberglass jackets. You can smell the leather of your gloves burning. Another carcinogen to make your day. Your hands are beginning to blister. You want to lean against the side of the tunnel & just walk down with your boots. The boots will take a long time to burn through. You glance behind. No dice. The back wall has sprouted needles. You admire the designers' salute to the eternal Marquis. Let go & fall. Maybe you'll survive. The rungs go cherry red as you streak past.

& it hurts. Nothing seems broken. EEG and EKG high-stress normal. Blood pressure monitor out. Most of your systems are running on auxiliary only. But it really hurts. You wish you could cut down the pain intake. (*EDIT EDIT EDIT REMOVE REF "PAIN INTAKE"*) You wobble to your feet. This level is dried-blood-brown and smells of chlorine bleach. You've got to

move quick. The downshaft will have set off alarms. *They know* where you are.

You run full tilt down the corridor past three intersections & turn left at the fourth.

Robot-hydra.

Glistening dome flexipipes with four hedge-trimmer heads. Four of them on a half-meter tall gray-metal pyramidal frustum. Runs on tank tracks. Flexipipes three meters long. It fills the corridor. Whipfast action. When a flesh-ripper nicks the corridor wall it throws blue sparks. It comes at you. Time for a quick decision. Pull the crossbow.

You gamble. Maybe the thing's not too smart — just motion sensitive. You freeze.

Wait.

Wait.

It's 3.5 meters away & you squeeze off a bolt into the wall just to the right. All four flesh-rippers hit the wall in a nova of blue sparks as you somersault forward over the machine. You hit the floor at a dead run. If your CONTACT's data is correct the next down shaft is only 2.9 meters deep. You won't have to touch the rungs, the plastic shocks built into your legbones will absorb the fall. You look. You leap.

You land on a stainless steel floor. The down-shaft closes above you head like an angry mouth.

This place doesn't scan. It's not the corridor you should be in. It's a long thin box. There's a glass-covered grating at the other end. Three heads gridded in the grating watching you. Small pipes open at each of the room's four corners. Glowing pus pours out. White vapor steams off the flows. Temperature drops sixty degrees instantly. The steel walls whine with contraction. Temp continues to drop. Your circuits can tolerate this. You wish your flesh could.

POV: CYBERSPACE

golden sparks in the gray void — radiation interference green characters ten meters high appear above they scroll past quickly reading: RADON NOBLE GAS GENERATED BY THE DECAY OF RADIUM. RADIOACTIVE. STRONG GAMMA GENERATION. ODORLESS AND COLORLESS AS GAS. LIQUEFIES AT -61.8° C AS IT NEARS SOLID STATE (-70°C) SOFT YELLOW GLOW BEGINS. SOLID RADON GLOWS ORANGE-RED AT THE TEMPERATURE OF LIQUID AIR. FIRST DIS

POV: MERGE PERSONALITIES WITH FESTRIR:

They're gonna freeze or drown you and even if you get free you'll die of radiation poisoning in a few hours unless you can make it back to your base medicos. You get the feeling that maybe these people don't like you. You pop open your attache'. You pocket the three most valuable biosofts. They squirm in your pocket. To hell

with the rest. Spill the contents on the floor. They emit sharp insect music as they die, strands of silver wire in the air. You kneel in front of a glowing pus fountain. The faces at the grill get closer. They think you're going to breath in. To kill yourself. You hold your breath while you fill your case. Feet are getting numb in the cold stream. Colder than that winter in Antarctica, where you played at cat-and-mouse with corporate ninjas in the sixth-month night. Probably have to get your feet replaced this time.

You feel the hate-adrenal pouring. Good... Give you vision to hate those corporations who engineered the take-over.

Timing is essential. You close the attache' gently. It may be brittle at such extremes. You grab it by a corner with your left hand. You can't trust the handle. Your right hand rests on the needle gun. You hurl the case against the glass-fronted grill in the far corner of the ceiling. They try to pull their heads away. Too late. You fire an automatic stream of needles into the case. The hot needles hit the liquid radon. Expansion/explosion. Attache' fragments and glass fill the room. Run forward. Leap. Grab the edge of the square hole where the grill was. Pull yourself up. Kick the headless bodies out of your way. Your feet are completely numb. Dead meat.

There it is. The Great Green Egg.

An ovoid containing the full maps, brains of that built this place. One of the most valuable information clusters on this planet. Slightly larger than a football. Quick now no gloating. You step forward & lift the Egg from the sensor band that connects to its world. There's a matte-black door beyond that you step through. And

POV: NONE TRANSMISSION ENDED DEADROOM (SYSOP — WHAT THE HELL IS HE DOING? THAT'S NOT THE WAY OUT. PATCH IN CONTINUITY. ANYTHING.)

A green light appears on my chest. Mary's standing just inside the deadroom. She gives me a quick kiss.

"You know the way out?"

She nods, "Sort of. The system out there provided a fantasy universe for the builders. You can download your brain through the sensor ring."

"Will I have time?"

"Maybe. It's an Aleph-one datasink. It can suck your mind out pretty quick."

"Don't sound like much."

"You can live your fantasies instead of theirs. It's your decision. Just give *me* the Egg and the biosofts."

That's Mary, romantic till the end.

She kisses me again & I step out of the dead-room.

POV: MERGE PERSONALITIES WITH FESTRIR: (EDIT EDIT EDIT TRANSMISSION RESUMED. KILL CONTINUITY PATCH. SYSOP — WHERE'S THE EGG? I DON'T THINK HE'S WITH US. BIGGEST SHOW IN TWO YEARS & HE'S NOT WITH US. WHO'S HE WORKING FOR?)

You step into the room. You want to go out & kill Stone Colds. The hall must be full of guards. You want to go kill them. You want to cut the tails off some scorpion boys. You want to do things with their dead bodies. You want to go kill them but you unplug your jack & attach it to the

POV: NONE TRANSMISSION ENDED (SYSOP — CAN WE STOP HIM? WE'VE GOT TO STOP HIM. KILL BROADCAST)

white noise...

(INITIATE PATCH-THRU. HOTWIRE MODEM LINK INTERFACE WITH HIVE SEC-SYSTEM. RAMROD PIRATE TRANSMISSION THRU SYSOP):

You cradle the Great Green Egg in your cupped hands. You jack in, fiber-O lead linking the SI in your skull with this quasi-legendary ovoid relic... You flow serenely through the wire into a great blue vortex. It sucks you up. Spins an entire world. You walk along the walls of the ancient city of Rothenburg. You watch the silver patterns of light on the Tauber River.

You cradle the Great Green Egg in your cupped hands. As your long, tapered nails scratch against its surface, there is a faint sound like high-pitched laughter twisted nearly out of recognition in the plaintive howl of wind...

POV: LONG SHOT DOWN LENGTH OF ABANDONED SUBWAY TUNNEL (X1):

Rusted rails angling inward towards a central focus, a dark vanishing point of shadow, far short of actual convergence.

Tall, sinister, cloaked-&-hooded figure walking away from camera, striding down the center of the rails, dwindling slowly into shadows of vanishing point

CUT TO: AUDIO:

The constant *whup whup whup* of the wind generators' blades

POV: LONG SHOT TRACKING SURFACE-SIDE:

The iron crosses with their tattered rinds of sun-scorched & wind-flayed flesh, echoing the endless deathsongs, *the strands of the chord*...

DISSOLVE TO:

white noise crackling across all bands... ⅛'

jackson & the cybernauts

..by Paco Xander Nathan, pacold@wixer.bga.com

Business suits and bleeding hearts argue fervently over "Commercialization of the Net"... Meanwhile, other people are doing more than just argue. The new Illuminati Online by Steve Jackson Games represents a bold, innovative venture into using Internet based MU* systems to foment community and marketplace. Here at FWR, we couldn't resist reporting about IO...

By now, you've probably heard *several* versions of how the *US Secret Service* acted — in violation of *beaucoup* federal laws — to seize (er, uh, "appropriate") equipment from a small, Austin-based role playing game company called *Steve Jackson Games*. Basically, SJG was hosting an online community called the *Illuminati BBS* (named after their QUINTESSENTIAL "conspiracy theory" board game) wherein they worked with writers, artists, gaming fiends, etc. SS spooks got a tip that the famed *Illuminati BBS* was "in reality" serving to disseminate "dangerous hacker info" and that SJG had nearly completed a new game/book, *GURPS Cyberpunk*, which could threaten national security.

Now I'm absolutely certain every hacker wannabe has a different version of this story to tell; each will swear how my version is Wrong. Frankly, I'm piss-silly tired of hearing that tripe 'cause I was one of only a half dozen *voyeurs* who actually *SAT* through the entire Federal District Court trial early in '93, where SJG sued the SS, and won... Geez, I had to listen to those SS bozos *whine* under sworn oath how they'd

wisely stayed out of the computer field at a time when video game profits went super-nova as a smart, albeit painful, move until *after* he'd tossed a few criminally-inclined Fed agents outta their promotion tracks.

Virtualize Whirled Peas

Revenge means enjoying a smile longer and later than one's detractors. So it was that announcements for *Illuminati Online* — SJG's first venture into cybspace — precipitated severe grins and shouts of glee around the *FWR* office. And it was fun watching Steve choke on that damn, *ubiquitous* three litre bottle of Classic Coke surgically attached to his wrist, when I proposed a title for this article. Bruce Sterling had erupted a spoken pearl moments prior: "Geez, the SS chopped off one phone line only to watch it become replaced by thirty others!" which got me thinking of simile between SJG/IO and a 1950's *Star Trek* precursor movie *Jason and the Argonauts*. Mythos, hydrae, heroic quests and golden fleece. [*Thanx, Bruce... your check cleared okay for puttin' the publicity photo on our cover.*]

Founded on the community of *Illuminati BBS*, the new *Illuminati Online* combines both spirit and praxis of conferencing systems like the WELL or MindVox, with the intensity of a Mecca For Gamers, all within the emerging morphology of those scattered MUD's, MOO's, MUSE's, MUCK's and whatnot dangling off socialized Fringes of Internet *to build a focal point*

IO, IO, It's Off To MUSE We Go...

So here's the pitch: *Illuminati Online* opens to the public shortly; it's being announced at *Gen-Con* even as I write. If you want to dial *IO* directly, there'll be a few dozen phone lines, otherwise *telnet* hither. Once online, choose among several attractions... if you wanna game — à la the original *Illuminati BBS* — there's a free gaming section. For conference socialites — à la WELLbeing/Voxer DIY-process-media-meets-akashic-recording-artists — you can buy a *Metaverse* account within *IO*, albeit for a tiny fraction of what other conference systems charge, more like a pay BBS.

If you REALLY enjoy gaming and MU* culture, well... SJG has been collaborating with friends and competitors throughout the industry to pull together the world's top haven for exploring the art of gaming and assumed persona for fun and profit. If you've attended a major SF/Comix/Gaming conference in physpace — like Atlanta's *DragonCon* or San Francisco's *World-Con* — then you grok the other-worldliness of a Con environment. Metaverse taps that creativity, fusing it into an online setting [*read: online confsys customers pay to enjoy a lower signal/noise ratio than Usenet ever attains*] to provide a definitive source for info about SF/Fantasy in general. Same goes for finally bringing the Comix community (heretofore less than computer-savvy) online.

You can imagine that Steve & Co. would honor the rights of others to *Discuss Weird And Controversial Things*. Metaverse features a cast of heavies coordinating discussions and resources about the Electronic Frontier, online legalities, activism/politics/economics/civil liberties, etc. A blurb from an internal planning note:

We want IO to be an open meeting place for ALL kinds of groups — especially those who have been chased away from the big pay systems as 'controversial.' We will listen to what our users want, and give them straight answers rather than PR meeble. And we won't try to keep our users from talking to each other. We WANT them to talk to each other.

...okay, now let's pull the blinders: "We don't ever want to turn into *Prodigy*, and you can kick us if we do."

3 Bom, IP Addr, Great View

I sat in on a planning session for *IO* recently, and spoke afterwards with a researcher specializing in online business models, Jim Baty... "You know, CompuServe's 'Shopping Mall' only lets a business update product/service entries once

> # "Geez, the SS chopped off one phone line only to watch it become replaced by thirty others!"

been paid $50k a year apiece out of our tax monies to commit felonies on behalf of a consortium of multinational telecom megacorps (Bellcore) *against* free-lancers and small businesses like SJG [*read: info-economic warfare*]. To paraphrase Jonl, *"We're not diggin' the destiny, we're PISSED OFF!"*

Needless to say, Steve Jackson is a bright, humorous, resourceful, at times *wily*, but most of all dauntless kinda guy... He's managed to collect/convince a bevy of incredibly energetic and talented people to work for SJG. "Once bitten, twice shy" the saying goes, ergo SJG

for online community and marketplace. SOUND FAMILIAR?! SJG not only boasts thirty or so direct lines, as B. Sterling kindly mentioned, *they've got an entire T1 line*. SJG online guru Doug Barnes recently dragged me kicking and screaming to his basement lair to show off the raw pipe gushing data packets into *IO*.

The lair PoV permeates... Over the past couple years, Steve's been watching the explosion of MU* culture, lurking and taking notes on y'all with insight and cunning that only a world class professional [*read: hardcore gaming addict*] can wield.

a month, and they can only revise the structure of their menu once a year" — whereas in ReaLife malls, some merchants change store displays hourly; that lack of flexibility breeds a problematic sociology. The *commercial* online service providers have no clue about the kinds of flexibility people have come to enjoy within MU*'s… Their old factory/industrial economic models of *limiting individual control to boost productivity* no longer apply for virtual communities, which constantly shift toward new attractors of attention.

MU*'s allow participants to construct and examine Reality online; only recently have academics begun to look at this morphology vis-a-vis business and marketplace. SJG's Metaverse uses part of its MOO to create a virtual city called *Freegate*, complete with street names along the lines of *Escher, Carroll, Babbage, Lovelace, Edison, Hollerith, Fuller*… People "lease" condos or offices, and businesses "lease" buildings in *V-Estate*, where "leasing" typically implies that you pay your regular account fees and also "maintain" the place, i.e. *do something with it.*

A sampled blurt from *The Penthouse Letters of Gregory X* for the *Drop-Ins* section this issue tells how a thriving, fictional VR marketplace forces California real-estate prices to nose-dive. I can *TESTIFY* from recent experience, when you start a business you get *EXTREME* pressure to invest in a storefront: *banks, tax collectors, postal clerks,* etc., geez everybody cites some arcane rule to preclude you from working at home. Yet everybody wants to know a place in physpace where they can bust down your door in case your business skips payments… Then again, everybody tacks on surcharges for you to maintain a business location: *extra utility fees, higher rental rates, extra insurance requirements,* etc. ANYTHING SEEM WRONG WITH THIS?!

Most business people are still stuck in the *you-must-have-some-kind-of-factory-attached-to-be-serious* mentality which has long since gone the way of the brontoburger. Graft on a factory, factor in the graft. Ironically, *businesses* — minus the ridiculous physpace preclusions — define a kind of *virtuality*; corporations literally are virtual entities, designed to live past their founder's deaths, as if corporations existed as some form of AI… If you consider how much money resembles information, *they do.*

The prescience of *Gregory X* underscores how much of today's commerce can be, and is, conducted in virtuality anyway. That signals a harsh omen for Real Estate mavens, and a lunch bell for V-Estate entrepreneurs like SJG. In fact, right now several enterprises are scrambling to "construct" storefronts, lobbies, retail shelves, etc. in Freegate.

FringeWare has its building — right next door to *bOING-bOING* and *WiReD* — in preparation for having customers come in and "browse", sample the wares, e.g. download and view scans of certain items or read extended reviews [*ed. note: been spending beaucoup late nights online*
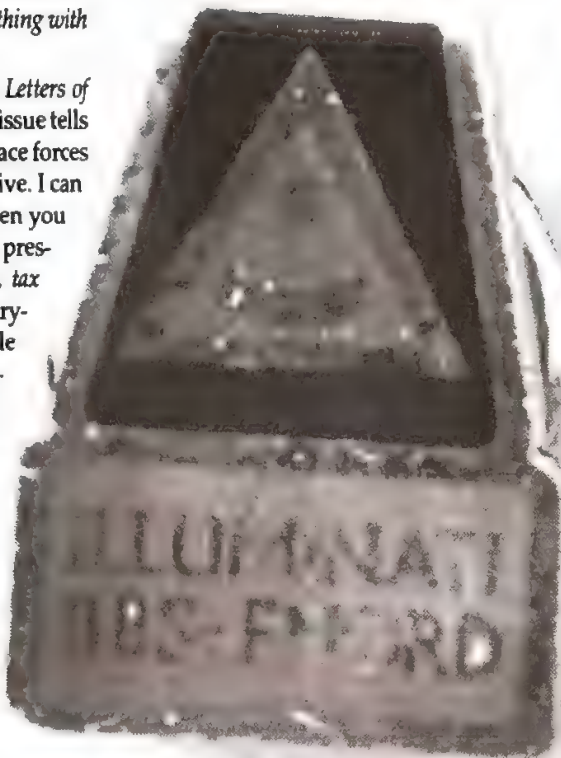
constructing our digs]. Big firms like Apple can afford to offer anonymous FTP sites for their customers, but now through *Illuminati Online* smaller firms have a low-cost option to remain competitive in the Information Economy.

The metaphor works well for service-sector pros, like lawyers. Needed any legal advice recently? You might try asking for help *CompuServe*, but oh yes, that's owned by a huge company repeatedly busted for bilking millions of under-informed suburbanites for over-priced tax and legal services… they probably won't allow much of an open forum/marketplace on their system. You could go to a local legal firm, which has to pay through the nose for public *expectations*, e.g. furnishing accouter-

Their old factory/industrial economic models of limiting individual control to boost productivity no longer apply for virtual communities…

ments like s.t.r.a.t.c. receptionists, non-cheesy artwork, hardwood desks. On the other hand, *Illuminati Online* office condos establish a low-cost but impressive virtuality environment for service providers. The WELL touched on this kind of business through private conferences — e.g. *bOING-bOING* had a private conference where editors would collaborate on new issues — but the MU* structure provides a better metaphor, one that's also easier for beginning computer-savants to grasp and master. Freegate also includes "community services" like meeting rooms where you can gather with friends to chat through secure comm.

The metaphor extends so well that SJG has added provisions for businesses to buy and sell MU* properties among themselves. As any *Monopoly* addict knows, the worth of a business is not how much cash it has in the bank, but how much potential it holds for generating revenue. If a "hot property" in virtuality draws mucho attention from online customers, then it's worth beaucoup bucks on the open market.

MICHAEL BRODY WON'T BUY YOUR NAKED LUNCH

I can already hear ululant rumblings from purist, anti-enterprise critics who'll cry "Commercial activities have no place on the Net." Face it, (a) we live here so we must do *something* to earn a living and buy groceries in physpace, and (b) *socialism* (implied by any government funded "non-commercial" Internet) only works for groups of less than 100-150 before buckpassing erodes sustainability, as Huddites proved long ago. Personally, I'm interested in encountering more than 150 people via the Net…

Even so, some of the cheesiest, sleaziest business I've ever encountered was in "commercial online services"… let's start with *Information America* and work our way up to *CompuServe*, quickly, before the bile rises. SJG is quite aware of their bedfellows' diseases, but they've brought protection:

We are opening our system to professionals — writers and publishers — from the game, science fiction, comics and related fields. We think that the

forum we're offering is wide enough to make it worth their professional time to call, and FUN enough that they'll consider it relaxation rather than simple duty... If all this professional participation doesn't make Illuminati attractive to readers, gamers and fans, nothing will.

The creators of Illuminati Online are not business types looking to make a quick buck. We all think of cyberspace as a place — a place to build a community, a place WE want to live. We want to make the Net accessible to EVERYBODY. And we want to make our part of it interesting, useful, and fun. We know that if we do that, we'll earn a fair profit, and that's good enough. We've set our pricing low enough that it should be no barrier.

Can You Tell Me Where I Might Find The Hydra?

I'll give *Illuminati Online* the attention it deserves... won't be going for the nifty *Filksinging* conference, geez, but rather to conduct life and livelihood through FringeWare. Hope to see you there, in whatever shape or dimension.

Also, look at the facts of the case... People at SJG are hardcore *Cypherpunks*. They are establishing a really interesting and potentially successful *net.business* which addresses important issues others haven't solved before, e.g. MU*'s as virtual storefronts and a practical V-Estate market. If you look at the subtext of the *IO* message, they've defined outlines for a *digital bank*. Please recall from last issue's "Cypherpunx" story how that implies a bold step away from our current mess of national sovereignties, megacorp slaveowners, and mainstream media mindwash. The beauty, subtlety and bite of this enterprise is that SJG draws its own narrative closure by placing the first commercial gaming MU* on Internet, as a basis no less for the same kind of DIY, grass-roots, global, virtuality commerce we've been attempting through FWI.

I worry, however, that the notion of a "conferencing system" may be a bit dated, having stemmed from experiments in "community memory" based on the "extended panel discussion" metaphor which quickly devolves into a place to chat-up potential prey. *P'haps that's just my bias from being an email list junkie.* Either way, I'm convinced that MU* systems represent ample, fecund sources for unimagined modes of discourse... For example, some conference topic forums could migrate onto the streets of Freegate, as a new kind of Theatre In The Round or "public assembly". Even the name "Freegate" makes a callback to Steve's character and innate drive to provide architecture for the kind of endeavor and democracies envisioned by that wacky band of Yankee Freemasons in the 1700's and those zany Greek philosophers a few millennia prior.

Sample à la denouèment from SJG promo lit to illustrate their commitment: *"Those who have called Illuminati before know that whatever happens, we come back :-) even if it's the Secret Service that takes us down."* Methinx that Steve Jackson and his company of cybernauts have weathered their travails to arrive at the sacred grove of Colchis and claim their Golden Fleece. Either way, they're having fun... so join 'em! ⅙³
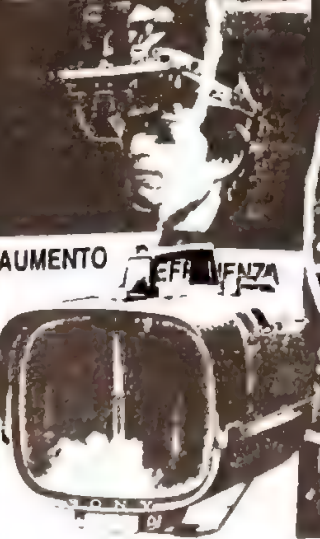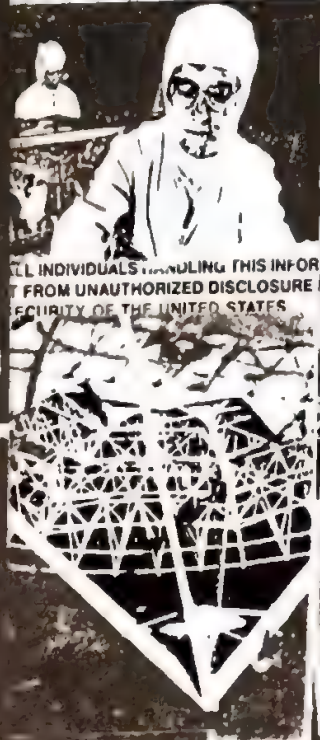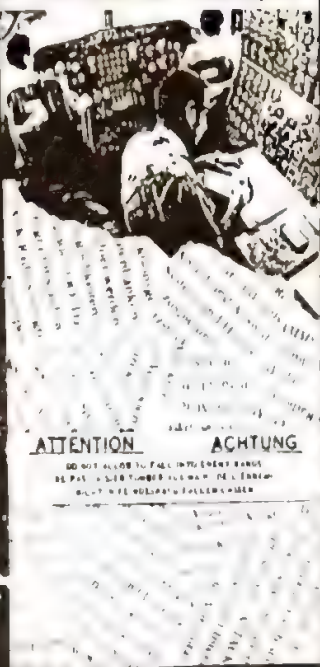
To check out IO, from any Internet host:
```
telnet illuminati.io.com
```

Hey, please drop buy our office in Freegate... To get there:
```
telnet metaverse.io.com 7777
```

then open an account or login as "guest" and visit FWR by using the command:
```
walk to FringeWare
```

bOING
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magazine

r.a.m.s. attack

..by Paco Xander Nathan, pacold@wixer.bga.com

FWR dropped by a small gathering this summer in Linz, Austria called *Ars Electronica '93*... an annual festival of art + technology, focused this year on "Genetic Art" and "Artificial Life". One of the main attention-grabbers poised disturbingly at the main entrance to video exhibits and conference auditoriums. Rising high above the crowd, a scaffolding array of metal tubes, wires, cameras, mics, monitors and speakers burst forth from the conference setting like a *Front 242* stage keyboard rack tangled in the wake of a tornado. Amidst this cybernetic swamp, two turnstiles (in/out) affixed to the tangled gateway, seducing conference patrons to penetrate their defenses and dare enter. As if these raw mental images were not threatening enough, periodically the entire set would rupture into a violent cacophony of loud, harsh Deutsch and bells and signal lights whilst trapping a would-be entrant. P'haps excerpts from the conference program might enlighten:

"Technologies have turned out to be problem makers, as an end in itself where limited techno-disciples worship in ecstasy — in the dusk — a golden calf, full of hope for the fictive Nirvana in the warm uterus of virtual realities ... R.A.M.S. Attack is brutal radio, a radio terminator which as a taker of hostages subjects its hostages to thematically glossed interrogation, commanding absolute obedience to ignore everything — like a great inquisitor — that seems not to fit in with his arbitrary schemes, stupid machine-intelligence! R.A.M.S. Attack is the backlash, radio for masochists who celebrate their orgasm in the first fuck ... The central module harbours a hierarchical language programme with a working question-answer system on a reverence word basis within acceptable tolerance ranges ... Emotive words act as attractors ... We are creating an interface where the medium and the public clash together ... The prerequisite is the occupation of existing spaces and as offensive as possible a breaking open of unreflected mechanisms."

Exploration of digital technology vis-a-vis radio/broadcast issues becomes particularly salient in light of Europe's introduction of digital radio (which the US is still struggling over). Our interview included exchanges with Bernhard Loibner and Margarete Jahrmann. By the way, the name derives from a line of American toys known as the *Rebel Army of Militant Sheep*, which can also be morphed to imply *Random Access Media System*, just in case you were wondering...

FW: Hi, I'm from an American magazine. I was wondering if I could interview you about what you're doing here?

BL: We're capturing people, to try to get some answers.

FW: Yeh!?

BL: It's an automatic radio station — can you see? With some computers and some questions — when we click it on it stops and nobody can pass — as you see? But it doesn't work all the time... We try to make clear how media systems work, that they don't work as *interactive systems*, really... This *isn't* an interactive system — if people only say something stupid to us, then we don't want to hear anymore from them... the idea that we should ask them questions and they only say some bullshit in response... Media doesn't work like this — if you look at a talk show on TV, audience members are only on the show to have somebody in the studio, but they aren't persons of interest for the people who make the media. This is the intention for our system here...

FW: You call it an "attack" — do you consider that broadcast media or non-interactive media in general is a kind of assault on an individual? A kind of a violence?

BL: I'm sure that it's some kind of violence. Here's also one point: there is a new kind of system called *digital audio broadcasting* which will also be possible in a short while for TV. Along with a normal broadcast program, you get certain extra information — for traffic or security. You have the possibility to get direct messages to your listeners without the [*untranslated word*].

BL: No, I don't think that interaction really works, so we don't try to demonstrate some new form of it here.

FW: Do you have any means of selection for the people you are capturing here? Any criteria?

BL: No, there is no selection.

[*Violent bursts of laughter erupt within the control room in response to a "victim" answering a rather risque series of Macintosh-based interrogation.*]

FW: I've got to tell you, I think your installation is the best part of the show. Coming from more of a "cyberpunk" background, I *really* appreciate what you're doing! It's a beautiful sight...

BL: It's a very rough thing. I also selected the architecture for our installation... It's like a spider; we catch people in our Web! Perhaps it should be even more rough, less straight lines...

FW: What would you do differently?

BL: People should have to find their way through this system — that would be very funny.

FW: A maze that assaults you, that would be great! Have you done this installation before, elsewheres?

BL: No, we did it once, just for here [*Ars Electronica '93*].

FW: Where are you all from?

BL: We're all from Vienna. By the way, I'm going to California in September and would like to get some cool contacts.

"Emotive words act as attractors... We are creating an interface where the medium and the public clash together..."

FW: Anonymity? Like traffic control systems with a controller who monitors surveillance about receivers' — the individuals' — movements?

BL: Yeh, that's what I wanted to say.

FW: A notion in media theory contends that we exist within a sea of overlapping "grids": for broadcast, for social interaction, electrical power transmission, etc. Are you trying to demonstrate an anchor for a grid here?

FW: Okay, here's my card — I apologize for the email host name "wixer"... 'Twas named after a science fiction character, they didn't know what that word meant in Deutsch.

BL: You are a programmer?

FW: Yes, I do Mac work — you have a Mac here... What other kinds of systems? Is this all based off a Macintosh?

BL: Yeh, I did the programming. As you see, it's only a Hypercard-based program. You can click on text — the buttons — to reconfigure the questions. Nothing very special because we

didn't have much time to develop a complicated system.

FW: That's preferable —

BL: Yeh, it's more reliable that way. Because we had to make a lot of changes, even once we got here we had to change the programming — so it was the only approach that made sense — [*extended group discussions in Deutsch, something's up...*] — Okay, so she wants to make a capture

FW: Most people don't realize what kind of violence comes at them out of their "tube", so you've made the metaphor concrete — I love that...

MJ: Yeh, we broadcast some parts of it too — in the radio.

FW: Oh, *YEH?!?!?!?!?*

MJ: Sure, we've got a small radio station here and we've been collecting parts of sayings and play them over the... "usual" program.

BL: You want to hear something *academic?!?* This is totally opposite from the official, cultural scene so... we broadcast in the Austrian radio network and we also have good money from official ministries to realize this work. There are no "legal" commissions to do "illegal" broadcasting here, but on the other hand, they did finance a lot of things. For example, this conference last year was always strained because everyone *knows* that the situation [*read: politics*]

Amidst this cybernetic swamp, two turnstiles affixed to the tangled gateway, seducing conference patrons to penetrate their defenses and dare enter.

now, so you get to witness it. We use many protocols for controlling the equipment...

FW: Great, what do you have on the end of the wire, as far as the mechanics?

BL: We have a lighting mix console here, which is controlled via MIDI, and that mixer console controls the barriers. The rest is mostly audio equipment, which also goes through a MIDI mixing console over there.

[*One floor below our control-room perch, a young Austrian woman attempts to enter the conference, passing through gateway turnstiles constructed and monitored by RAMS Attack. Midway through the turnstile, a servo locks, trapping her within the gateway as a loudspeaker placed near her ears launches an interrogation in Deutsch — a man's voice dropped at least two octaves. She acquiesces to answer extended questioning, while struggling to escape her cybernetic captor(s).*]

FW: Did you make the samples with MacRecorder?

BL: Yes — [*shows digitizer unit*] — we have a database of text converted into speech, and I copied some of the questions using ResEdit, that's all...

FW: In that case, you probably don't have to use many XCMD's [*Macintosh equivalent of DLL's for Windows.*]

BL: No, I just use one — the MIDI XCMD, an item from the HyperMidi stack.

FW: Do you allow *any* means to use a mic on yourself to ask questions?

BL: We didn't want to do *any* interactive thing at all, because the "interaction" we approach is the connection with *non*-interactive media like TV and radio.

FW: You mean, that what people say in response down in the turnstiles, you use that as sample sound bites for radio broadcasts?

MJ: The basic idea is that the "ordinary" radio program is existing, and every time the trap is hounding somebody, we go live on the air. The intention is to be the ultimate virus program.

BL: Actually, we destroy the usual program — it has to do with our media situation in Austria, since we don't have private radio, we don't have private TV, we don't have public access.

FW: Hmm, yeh, we kinda do, but when you come over to the US, I ought to show you around some of the local city access TV facilities... There's some pretty good programs in my city out of that work — *Global Jungle, Content Neutral* — but there's also a lot of pirate broadcast in the US. Have any of that here?

BL: Yeh, we did it in Vienna for nearly one and a half years...

FW: Alright! Was it stationary or mobile?

BL: Both. It always was changing... But then the *situation* [*read: colloquial Deutsch for "politics"*] became worse and we had to go underground...

[*A long chat about private matters ensues — off record...*]

BL: Yeh, we do the same — we did a "vacation" in Vienna, but it was financed by our ministry here, with lots of support <he, he, he>. That's okay!

FW: Cool deal. Is there any, er, uh, how should I put this... any theoretical offshoots of what you're doing? People analyzing for "academic reports" then?

aren't agreeable, so the government tries to support arts more in return. The media laws here are very, very bad.

FW: I've heard that the ORF [*Austrian radio/ television broadcast monopoly*] is a government thing...

BL: Oh, in the whole media system — also with the papers included — our media situation here is the most constrained in the entire world [*geez, y'all haven't been to Singapore or Vancouver*] — Austria has maybe 7.5 million people, and there's one paper that on weekends has nearly 3 million readers. So that's really strange.

FW: Groupthink, yeh.

[*Bizarre, piercing sounds erupt, like some alien prelude in a Spielberg movie. A broadcast kicks in featuring a new captive in the turnstiles.*]

FW: I just saw a camera crew trained on the turnstiles downstairs. Did you know that was going to happen?

BL: Yeh, there was a famous television personality coming through, and we were supposed to have him filmed — he didn't know the questions though... We asked him some "dirty" questions [*which apparently concerned the possibility that a particular genital member of his physical personage was dangling through a whole in his pants*] and he answered them without knowing about the live broadcast.

[*...at which point much of the discussion broke apart into giggles and quips and I nearly didn't get out of the control room unscathed because a certain female member of RAMS Attack wanted to abscond off with my only copies of* Future Sex *and* WiReD. *Very wonderful people; I sincerely hope they don't get arrested or anything after this interview.*] ⅛
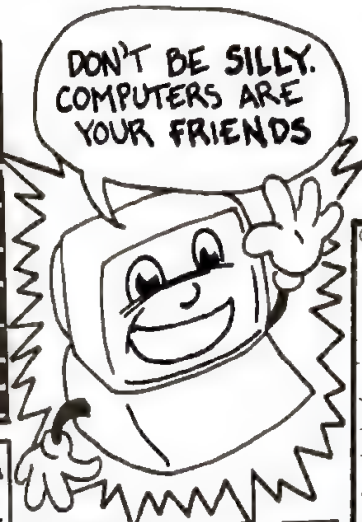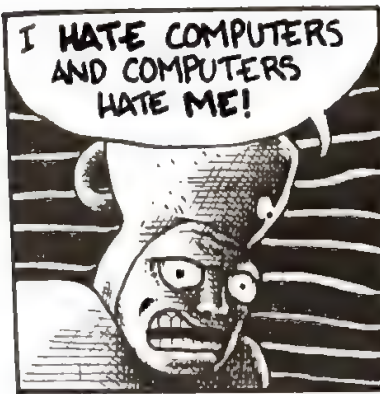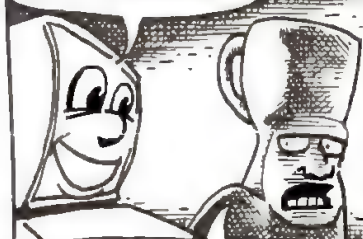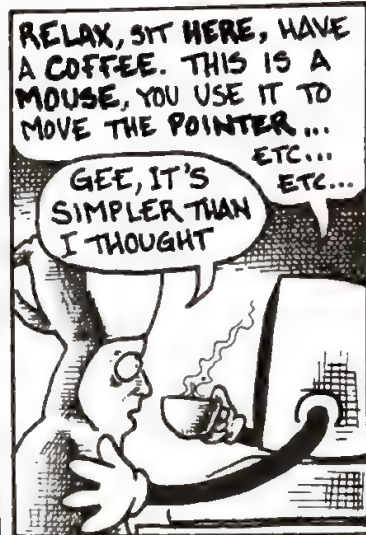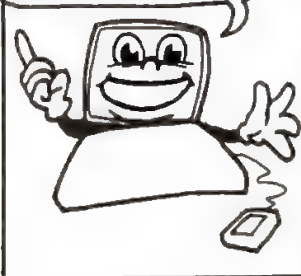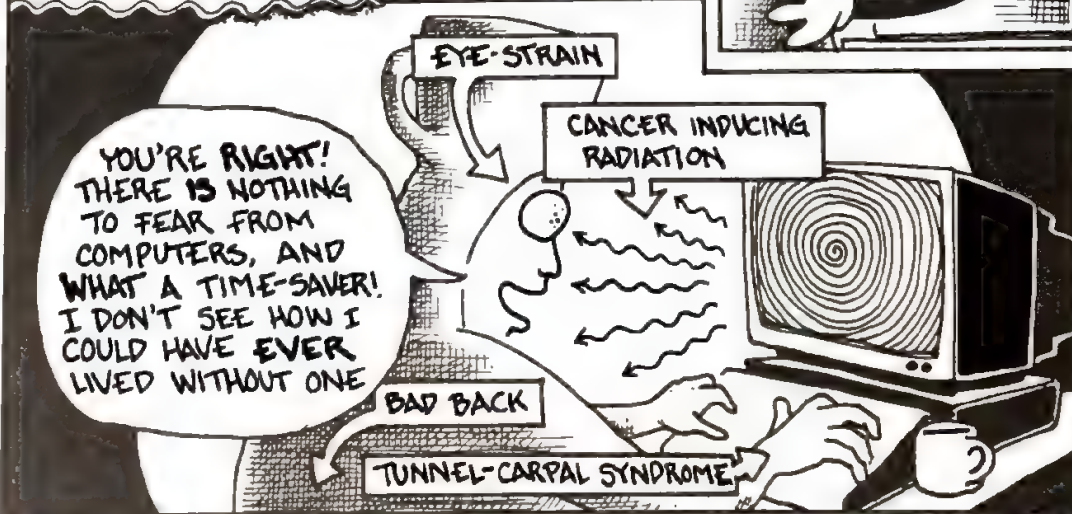
widgets

Welcome to the praxis of *Applied Memetics*... a marketplace for our Fringe **community**... **live** and direct from the borderlands of virtuality... Here are a few pointers for people who would like to know more about how to participate here. *NB*: the following paragraphs have a phrase listed in bold at the end — send this phrase, as an email message, to our mail server to get more details: **fringeware-request@wixer.bga.com**

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DISSEMINATE... Fringeoids can help you and yours with writing, artwork, online publicity and consulting in general for like-minded businesses — *for a small fee*. **get mission**

PRODUCE... The following product listings could use a boost from you. Do you build gizmos? Author multimedia? Design weird wearable memes? Talk with us... and for a listing of our audience: **get hosts**
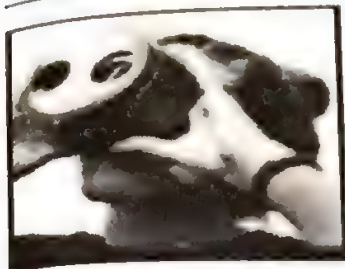
PROCURE... Hey, we've got a fun and novel catalog of Widgets here — buy stuff that you won't find in mainstream distribution! Shipping rates apply only in the US; double all shipping rates on international orders. Call before placing interplanetary orders. Texas residents add 8% sales tax. Listings supersede any previous FWI price list. All products subject to availability; we reserve the right to drop any product at any time. Our vendors are Fringeful, many build their wares in small infrequent runs, so orders can take weeks to get filled, but we won't cash your check until we start shipping the order. We don't do credit cards, purchase orders, C.O.D., toll-free numbers, consignment, product marketing or wholesale. We are not a big company, we travel frequently, get deluged with strange requests, etc., so it may take several days for us to respond even to intelligible inquiries, but we will sincerely try. **get prices**

Send money order, postal money order or check drawn in US funds:

Code	Product Name, Version	Quantity	Price	Shipping	Extended
			Sub-Total		
			SalesTax (Texas only, 8%)		
			Shipping		
			Total Purchase		

mind control

Day Dreamer
..by Alpha Odysseys
$14⁹⁵ + $2⁰⁰ ship
GROK-01

Made from purple plastic, this device vaguely resembles a diving mask... perfect for your next dive into the *Neuroverse!* You look toward the nearest star with eyes closed, then blow into a tube with long, deep breaths, which causes the device's inner disk to rotate. Strobed natural light on closed eyelids produces photic stimulation, which combines with paced breathing for a wonderfully vivid, kaleidoscopic experience. *Simply the most intense brain machine available for the cost/performance* — so long as you have sunlight and breath to invest in clearing your mental cobwebs... Called "the LSD flight simulator" by Timothy Leary. Kelly Green of Alpha Odysseys has been nominated for the *1993 Best Grey-Matter Gizmo* award by **FWI**.

Esprit ESP-1
..by Synetic Systems
$129⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
GROK-02

Pocket-sized brain machine, which **FWI** uses for rentals at raves & clubs. Six built-in programs range from 10 to 30 min, in Alpha, Theta and Beta states. Powered by 4 AA batteries. *A best buy these days in terms of price, performance and durability.*

MasterMind DLS
..by Synetic Systems
$199⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
GROK-03

A very popular mid-range, pocket-sized brain machine with more extensive controls beyond the *Esprit.* External audio input, built-in NiCad batteries and recharger. Other models available — call.

SYNERGIZER

Synergizer
..by Synetic Systems
$475⁰⁰ + $0⁰⁰ ship
GROK-05

Add-in card + software for any IBM PC clone. Great graphical interface for designing brain machine sessions up to 10 hrs or 300 segments long. This is where all brain-machines are headed. *Why buy extra gizmos — use your PC as a custom brain machine?*

Mind Mirror
..by KnoWare
$19⁹⁵ + $1⁰⁰ ship
GROK-06

"*ThoughtWare for Mind-tool or Mind-play*" from Timothy Leary. Autographed manual, DOS color psych self-analysis, 5.25 disk.

Digital Psychic
..by Jeff Posey
$14⁹⁵ + $0²⁵ ship
GROK-07

DOS software for digital seances. "*Requires VGA graphics, mouse and a relaxed state of mind.*" Stonehenge pix for your visual/psychic pleasure. If you've ever used a Ouija board, then you know what to do...


IBVA 1.5
..by Psychic Lab Inc.
$1295⁰⁰ + $0⁰⁰ ship
GROK-08

Interactive Brainwave Analyzer system. A sensor head band radio-xmits signals to a state of the art EEG system for the Mac. 3D FFT software provides visual analysis in real-time and translates brain modalities into MIDI events, graphic animation, RS-422 control signals, etc., for brain wave controlled multimedia and VR. See review in *Mondo 2000 #7.*
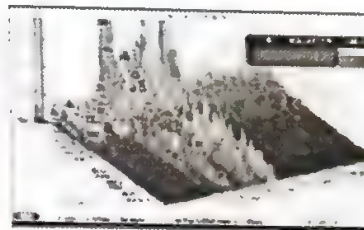
IBVA, 2-Channel Upgrade
..by Psychic Lab Inc.
$1115⁰⁰ + $0⁰⁰ ship
GROK-09

Upgrade kit to allow for two IBVA systems to be used in tandem. Tag-team EEG play with a grokbuddy, or use two head bands to analyze left/right brain EEG simultaneously.
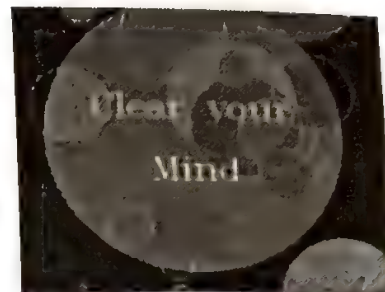
Reduce Stress
Stop Smoking
..by David's Designs Software
$29⁹⁵ + $3⁰⁰ ship
GROK-10

DOS software which tracks your circadian rhythms, asks psych profile questions for color prefs, adjective pairs, melody prefs, etc. Then run sessions during your calculated "down" times —*as a psychoactive screen saver*— to nix stress. The second title uses similar techniques to reduce your urge to smoke.
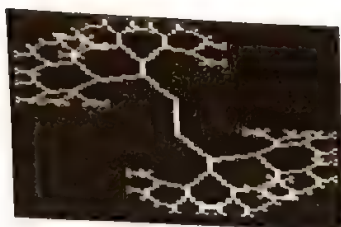
cyborganics

Tierra Simulator 4.0
..by Virtual Life
$63⁰⁰ + $2⁰⁰ ship
BORG-01

The Artificial Life simulator which blew the lid off modern computing. Written by Alife aficionado Tom Ray, the Tierra package includes DOS executables and installation, along with source code for DOS and Unix. See articles, talks by Steven Levy for great discussions about Tierra. True, you *could* just download the source code from Tom's FTP site, iff you have (1) good Internet access (2) a few spare Mbytes for incoming FTP, (3) understand Unix tools like *uncompress* and *tar*, (4) lots-o space time to kill trying to get the Turbo C code to run... This package is what Tom sells for people who aren't programmers, since Tierra executables are prohibited from distribution.

WIDGET

just grep it.

Blind Watchmaker
..by WW Norton
$10⁰⁰ + $1⁰⁰ ship
BORG-02

Evolutionary "biomorph" software for DOS or Macintosh, based on the Richard Dawkins book. We use these ALife wares to illustrate zines; some of them sprinkle about these very pages. 'Tis a nifty, low-cost intro package that animates lessons about modern evolutionary theory.

Mayan Calendrics
..by Dolphin Software
$64⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
BORG-03

An academic tour-de-force written for exploring correlations between Maya and Western calendric dates. Allows for various hypotheses about the Maya calendar... Not long ago it was 12.18.19.9.6 in the Tikal system using correlation number 584,283, also called 1 Cimi 9 Yax, which PC anthropologists would call 13 Oct 92 CE, and agreed by most modern astronomers to be Julian day number 2,448,909. BTW, this provides an *interesting* way to encode a sequence of numbers one might care to protect...
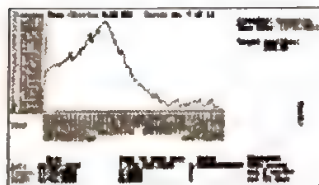
Timewave Zero
..by Dolphin Software
$64⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
BORG-04

Hexagram #49: "*The magician is the one who makes the calendar.*" Tis high time for an *archaic revival*: this DOS software illustrates Terence McKenna's theoretical work on Novelty, Time, and the end of history, i.e. Singularity. "*A precision instrument*

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for exploring the theory of time as a fractal wave derived from the King Wen Sequence of I Ching Hexagrams. Based on extraterrestrial communications..."

Menstat 2.0

..by Sudona
$99⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
BORG-05

Fertility planning software for Macintosh, which uses neural nets to adapt to an individual's patterns. Easy to use graphical interface, lunar calendar, herbalism hypertext database, and extended documentation as a health text. Check out Susie Bright's review in *Future Sex* #2.

Menstat 3.0
..by Sudona
$39⁰⁰ + $2⁰⁰ ship
BORG-06

Fertility planning software for Macintosh (and soon for DOS too!) Lunar calendar. Less features than version 2.0, unbundled from hypertext database and the extended documentation.

EnviroAccount
..by EnviroAccount Software
$27⁹⁵ + $2⁰⁰ ship
BORG-08

A new software package for DOS or Macintosh that runs environmental impact analysis for individuals and gives a score ranging from *Eco-Titan* to *Eco-Tyrannosaurus rex*. Covers most of what you do "*in excruciating detail.*"
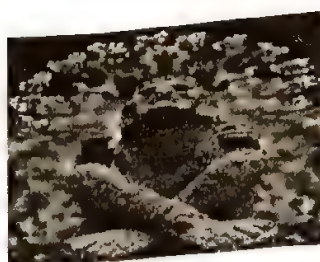
Xochi Speaks
..by Lord Nose!
$24⁰⁰ + $1⁰⁰ ship
BORG-10

Full-color poster of *Xochipili*, Aztec god of Flowers (wink, wink) with 16-page *Guide to the Psychedelics*. *Mondo 2000* #7 sez: "*Very neatly and artistically fills an educational niche.*" Info on taxonomy, cross tolerance, nutritional support, etc., partly excerpted in the public domain *Xochi Stack* for Hypercard.

d.i.y. tech

PowerGlove
..by Mattel
$Inquire
GZMO-01

Mattel's ultra low-end VR device, based on the famous VPL *DataGlove*, for 3D input to your computer. Limited used & new models — *subject to availability.*
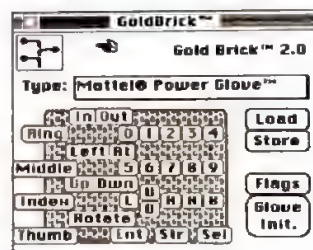
GoldBrick/Nugget
..by Transfinite Systems
$169⁰⁰ + $2⁰⁰ ship
GZMO-02

Macintosh software (*GoldBrick*) & hardware (*Nugget*) that translates game peripherals to substitute for the mouse. Includes Hypercard stack for 3D input and C source to write your own drivers. Mattel PowerGlove, Nintendo Zapper, Broderbund Uforce, etc. Powered from ADB port.
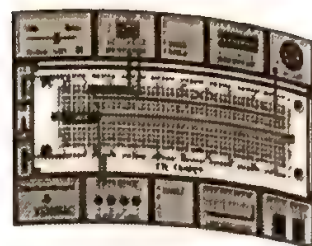

MacBreadboard
..by YOERIC Software
$59⁹⁵ + $3⁰⁰ ship
GZMO-05

A Mac-based TTL trainer simulator, comes with sample circuits and a 50 page manual. Pre-packaged simulations based on 78 different TTL chips. Wonderful graphics. Check Dec 92 issue of *MacWorld* - received a 4 star review.

Nosy & The Debugger
..by Jasik Designs
$349⁰⁰ + $0⁰⁰ ship
GZMO-06

Symbolic, hypertext-based debugger & disassembler for Macintosh, which special support for THINK-C and MPW. Pefect for pulling apart just about any Mac software.
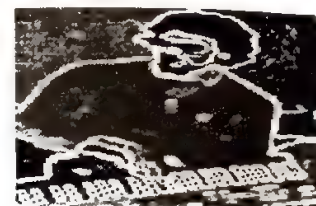
FRED13
..by Robitron Software
$199⁹⁵ + $3⁰⁰ ship
GZMO-08

Natural language one-liner dialog generator AI. Used for the "FRED13" topic of the *mondo* conference on The WELL. DOS or Unix. Call about source license.

FRED13 demo
..by Robitron Software
$43⁰⁰ + $2⁰⁰ ship
GZMO-09

Same as above but doesn't learn new phrases; has 12000 phrase/response records, enough to hold a pretty loose conversation. Great for intelligent agents on a BBS.
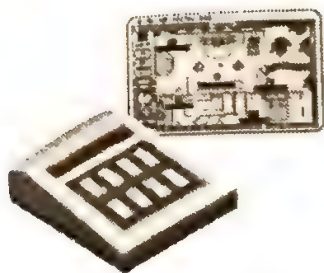

X-10 CPU Interface

..by X-10 Home Controls Inc.
$65⁰⁰ + $0⁰⁰ ship
GZMO-10

Controls lighting, appliances, security, etc. by sending signals over existing house wiring and/or infrared and radio transceivers.

Model CP290 connects to the serial port of a Mac or PC. Bundled software can pre-set up to 128 timed events on up to 256 modules using multiple schedule files, then the unit disconnects from the computer. Mac version uses PICTs and icons to represent maps of your home.

Dozens of X-10 peripherals are available, ranging from motion detectors to telephone transponders which dial multiple numbers in your voice… Connecting cable included. We can also get most of the X-10 Powerhouse Modules at reasonable prices — ask.
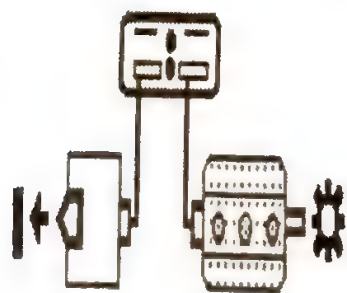
Hyperbot Interface Kit

..by Bots
$315⁰⁰ + $4⁰⁰ ship
GZMO-11

"Flexible robotic control and Hypercard tools for education." Easy-to-learn, Mac-based graphical controller for popular robotic kits: LEGO, Capsella, MOVIT, fishertechnik. Other "activity kits" available.

melt-o-media
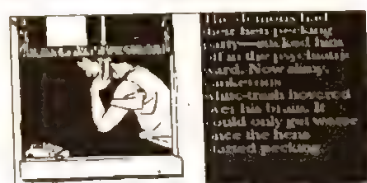
Ambulance

..by Electronic Hollywood
$14²⁵ + $0⁷⁵
MELT-01

Sound-tracked horror novel of five LA post-collegiate twenty-something posers. "Upon John's release from rehab, they crash their car in a deserted stretch of Hollywood Hills and get picked up by a serial killer masquerading as an ambulance driver." Non-linear story by Monica Moran lets you chose doors, windows to alter the plot. Hypertext links for plot clues and mind-wrenching animation by Jaime Levy (author of the recent Billy Idol's Cyberpunk disk), artwork by Jaime Hernandez of Love and Rockets, soundtrack by Mike Watt. Requires: Mac w/ 6.0.7 or later, 2 Mb RAM, shipped on 1.4 Mb floppy. Jaime Levy of Electronic Hollywood has been nominated for the 1993 Best Melt-O-Malto Media award by FWI.

**Cyber Rag II
Cyber Rag III
Electronic Hollywood I
Electronic Hollywood II**
..by Electronic Hollywood
$5²⁵ each + $0⁷⁵ ship
MELT-02

Mac electronic publications from premiere techno-punk electronic zinester Jaime Levy. Mondo 2000 #7: "Angst animations, premenstrual poetry, rambunctious reviews, seductive sound samples" as well as subversive info for all. Started out as a student project that frankly just took over. Electronic muchomedia with cutting insight, captivating production and a severe attitude! Each issue editorializes the frustrations of big city life from a Post-Boomer POV as La Editrix wanders from NYC to SF to LA to NYC to SF to LA to…
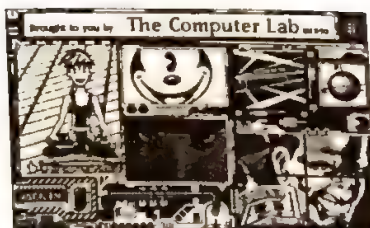
Beyond Cyberpunk! v1.5

..by The Computer Lab
$32⁵⁰ + $2⁵⁰ ship
MELT-03

Attention Citizen! New Update! Multimedia tour-de-force of art, literature, thought and practice in a postmodern/cyberpunk genre. "Like scuba diving in an Encyclopedia." Requires HyperCard 2.x: coolest stack on the planet. Peter Sugarman, Gareth Branwyn, Mark Frauenfelder, Bruce Sterling, Richard Kadrey, Paul Di Filippo, Steve Brown, Hakim Bey, Rudy Rucker and even other famous people working under pseudonyms, all cross linked via hypertext with industrial sound track, animation clips, digital book marks and a dictionary that pronounces its terms. "You must open your eyes, ears, and minds to the river of information that is growing exponentially… in raging turbulence… beyond anyone's ability to comprehend… you may find yourself washed up onto an alien shore someday, and you'd better be ready."

**Expanded Books:
Neuromancer, Count Zero,
Mona Lisa Overdrive
The Complete Annotated Alice
The Tao Of Pooh, The Te Of Piglet
Jurassic Park
The Complete Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
Genius: Life & Science of R. Feynman
Jurassic Park (w/ sounds)
Amusing Ourselves To Death,
Brave New World, etc.
Asimov Complete Stories #1**
..by The Voyager Company
$17⁰⁰ each + $1⁰⁰ ship
MELT-05

Mac software for electronic versions of popular novels with illustrations, sounds, hypertext links, digital bookmarks and even hidden extras in the stories. Run word and phrase searches, add margin comments and end notes, highlight text, etc. "Electronic text is a dynamic medium that enables you to become a more active reader." Requires: System 6.0.7 or later w/ 31 cm or larger monitor, HyperCard 2.1, 1.4 Mb disks.
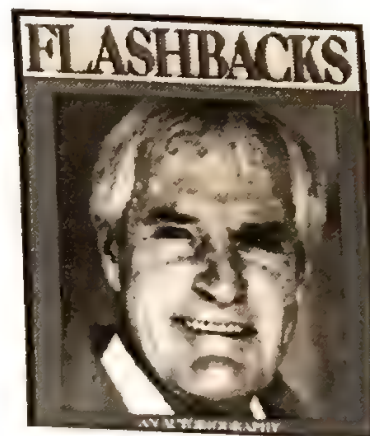
Flashbacks
..by KnoWare
$12⁰⁰ + $1⁰⁰ ship
MELT-04

"A Personal & Social History of an Era." Online version of Timothy Leary's autobiography, with foreward by William S. Burroughs. "Part man, part myth; part knight, part dragon."

Infodisk #3
..by EFF-Austin
$10⁰⁰ + $0⁷⁵ ship
MELT-06

Legal filings, documentation and related articles covering the Steve Jackson Games vs. US Secret Service lawsuit, which the mirrorshaded-ones lost! FWI makes no profit off these disks; if you buy 'em, the money goes to help support EFF-Austin with its crew of subversives: Steve Jackson, Bruce Sterling, et al., as they strive on behalf of protecting our electronic freedoms. DOS or Mac formats.
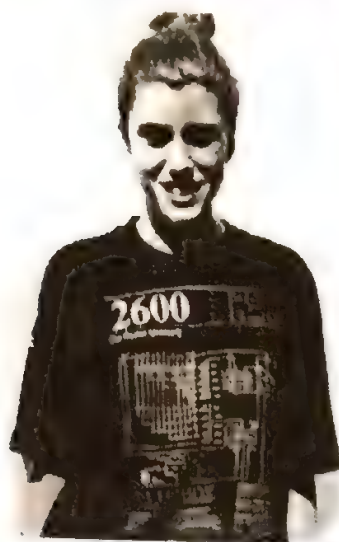
2600 T-shirts

..by 2600 magazine
$12⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
MEME-01

White illo of the original Blue Box circuit diagram on black cotton cloth. XL size only. Captions sez: *"This is what started it all…"*

Kata Sutra T-shirts

..by bOING-bOING magazine
$12⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
MEME-02

Kata Sutra logo with mind-bomb. Join the neo-wobblies in their great neuronautical adventures against the GIC! Black on white cloth. XL size only. Caption sez: *"Get Illuminated!"*

DIS NET T-shirts

..by Dissemination Network
$10⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
MEME-03

Biohazard/radiation symbol with caption *"This Is Information"* from Texas' premier Tek-Know™ muse/vid artists. White on black cloth. XL size only. Designs may mutate over time.

Matrix News T-shirts

..by Matrix Information and Delivery Services, Inc.
$22⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
MEME-04

Color computer graphic representation of the Matrix of computer networks interconnecting Planet Earth. Global net demographics hand screened in a seven layer full color design on white cloth. XL size only.

2600 Panties

..by 2600 magazine *(sorta)*
$7⁰⁰ + $0⁵⁰ ship
MEME-05

Geez, *2600 magazine* dumped a huge box of their shirts on us, including *mediums*. No self-respecting hacker would ever wear a medium shirt… So we did what we had to — we cut up our excess inventory and made 'em into women's bikini undies. Same illo as the shirts; could be illegal to wear in some states. Specify size: L, M, S or give custom measurements. So you're a hacker, huh? Just *try* to hack your way into these!

Machine Screws

..by FringeWare Inc.
$1²⁵ per sheet + $0³⁰ ship
MEME-06

Stickers with a machine screw logo, approx. 5 cm square. Just about the same size as those ubiquitous *"I Heart <whatever>"* stickers. You know what to do. 12 stickers per sheet.

World's Greatest Computer Disk Stickers

..by Black Eye Designs
$2²⁵ + $0³⁰ ship
MEME-08

That's right, these are really great: the world's greatest computer stickers. Packet has 12 diskette labels, each with color artwork, infoblurbs and plenty of space left over for labeling your bytes. Two collections: dinosaurs with cool facts about each monster lizard shown, and another with plenty of smiles: Cheshires, Laurels, Moons and Mona Lisas, each with a nifty literary quote. Specify style collection with your order.

Schwa T-shirts

..by Schwa
$14⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰
MEME-09

"Remain where you are!" Alien detector on front pocket and abduction instructions will keep you safe at all times. Black on white cotton with birth + school + love + work + church + abduction illo on back. XL size only. *"Not for the squeamish."*

Complete Schwa Kit

..by Schwa
$15⁰⁰ + $1⁰⁰ ship
MEME-10

"All the basic equipment for alien defense in one simple kit!" A brilliantly terrifying tale of alien abduction, told in a book that contains only symbols and illustrations. Kit also includes alien invasion survival keychain, cards, stickers, etc. F5 sez: *"Whitney Schrieber alien rapture conspiracy virus attack! Suicide = redemption = money."* A perfect intro text for surveying the stealth landscape of paranoia, alienation and disappearance. *"Stay awake!"*
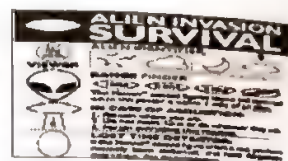
Alien Invasion Survival Card

..by Schwa
$1⁰⁰ + $0⁵⁰ ship
MEME-11

"Identify aliens instantly with the amazing Xenon coated identifier" on a keychain. Includes: abduction rangefinder, lost time detector, abduction rules, saucer viewer, etc. Includes a peephole so that you can see what happens when they don't think you are watching.

Yoyodyne Parking Permit

..by Pegasus Publishing
$1⁵⁰ + $0⁵⁰ ship
MEME-15

Now you can safely park your vehicle in any of the eight dimensional slots. Transparent decal, 8 x 10 cm.

'92 Republican Convention T-shirt
..by Pescado Production
$15⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
MEME-16

Ever noticed how cops enjoy rubbing their nightsticks? Here's proof from the ACT-UP rally/rout in Houston at the '92 Convention. Black on white, XL size only.

augmenting

Space/Time Fabric Hats
..by Rolling Thunder
$12⁰⁰ + $1⁰⁰ ship
CHIP-01

Reversible patchwork floppy hats with recycled electronics buttons, and the esteemed **FWI** label. *People will think you speak another language, regardless of where you go.* Custom orders for fabric colors/motifs at no extra charge.
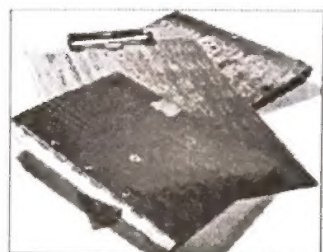
Circuit Board Clipboard
..by Tecnotes
$11⁰⁰ + $2⁰⁰ ship
CHIP-03

33 by 24 cm clipboard made from recycled circuit boards. Colors and designs vary with sources.

Circuit Board Binder
..by Tecnotes
$12⁰⁰ + $2⁰⁰ ship
CHIP-04

30 by 24 cm 3-ring binder, with steel polyhinge. Made from recycled circuit boards. Colors and designs vary with sources.

'Warewear Earrings
'Warewear Broaches
'Warewear Tie Tacks
..by Chiphead
$5⁰⁰ + $0⁵⁰ ship
CHIP-06

Computer chips recycled into jewelry. Earrings come in three designs: dangling on hooks, piercing on posts, and "puncture" (pierced with leads cut to look like chip is implanted in your ear lobe). Add $2 for windowed EPROM.
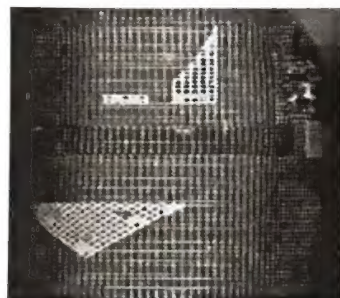
Voltar Masks
..by Duran
$25⁰⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
CHIP-07

In the tense battles to protect *Voltar*, one of the last remaining M class planets of a nearby star system, our superhero Duran has produced a new kind of electronically enhanced masks to protect his agents. Crafted from recycled electronic scraps, blinking LED circuits, see-thru plastic mesh, sunglasses and velcro, these masks might help the wearer to perceive beyond the media mindwash. Besides, they're fun at parties. Takes 4 watch batteries.

Sterling Cigarette Holders
..by Rolling Thunder
$25⁰⁰ + $0⁵⁰ ship
CHEM-01

Rat bastards have nearly outlawed all the fun—you can't even find a decent gonzo cigarette holder anymore... So **FWI** asked to have a new line fabricated: sterling silver, just like Dr. HST employs. 15 cm long, beveled lip. Specify polished or oxidized—"Tasty" sez PXN, with a mumbled and slightly paranoid expression.
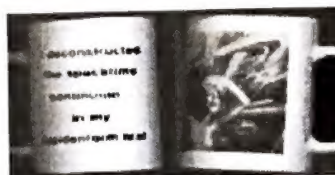
Pomo Art Mugs
..by Jeff Gorvetzian
$14⁵⁰ + $3⁰⁰ ship
CHEM-02

Dose your hourly caffeine fix using a handy *post-modern* mug. Enscribed with: *"I deconstructed the spacetime continuum... in my Maidenform bra!"* and accompanying pomo artwork. One size fits all, they're refillable. **FWI**'s nomination for the **1993 Substance Ab-Use Award** goes to Jeff Gorvetzian, because *we drink coffee with him...*

Polar Bear Snuff
..by Devonshire Apothecary
$7⁰⁰ + $0⁷⁵ ship
CHEM-03

A bit of herbal snuff to help wake you up for a long night of driving, writing, hacking or whatever... Manufacturer sez: "This shameless little concoction has always been our most popular herbal toy." White powder that contains caffeine crystals, red ginseng, kava kava, menthol crystals, clove & wintergreen oils. 2.5g.
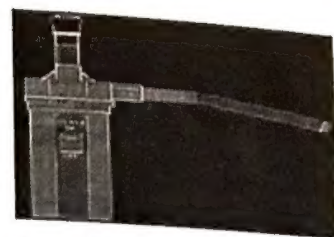
Power Pipe
..by Lightspeed Electronics, Inc.
$30⁰⁰ + $2⁰⁰ ship
CHEM-05

Imagine having a small vacuum cleaner work in reverse to smoke your **TOBACCO** for you! Just flip the switch a moment and enjoy the lovely smokes. Many who use this claim they'll never go back to manual pipes again!
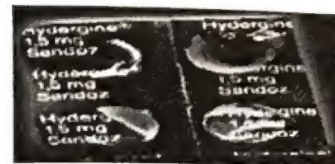
Smart-Assed Foods
..by Colonel Kernel
$5⁰⁰ + $0⁵⁰ ship
CHEM-07

Horribly stale popcorn with obnoxious salty coating. Shipped in airline puke bags. Some people care about their consumers, these people are just smart-asses. Not for human consumption.

game-thingz

Hacker
..by Steve Jackson Games
$17⁷⁵ + $3⁰⁰ ship
PLAY-01

The United States Secret Service wanted SJG's upcoming GURPS Cyberpunk game book so badly, They violated several Fed laws just to seize it... (*Shows you how much time They spent protecting G. Bush's life.*) This board game was written as a satire of the SS ordeal — similar to the popular *Illuminati*, but with a lot of Jolt Cola and monster modems mixed in... Boot up your Hackintosh and watch out for your alleged friends. *Fnord.*
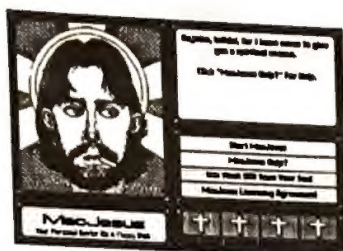
MacJesus
..by Smurfs In Hell
$9⁹⁵ + $0⁷⁵ ship
PLAY-02

"Your personal Saviour on a floppy disk." Claims to help give you *"an inside track when dealing with the Creator Of The Universe."* An interactive mano-a-mano with that special avatar, for personal evaluation and advice. Based on Hypercard 1.2 - with special thanx to Miss Fifi LaRoue for *"helping write the really dirty stuff."* Robert Carr of *Smurfs In Hell Productions* has been nominated for the **1993 Most Fringeful Character** award by **FWI**... If we were playing ball, Robert would be the all-time MVP. There may be others nominated this year, or even in the following years, but *none* will ever match the personal diligence to which Robert has pursued the inherent strangeness of the *Humanoid Condition*.
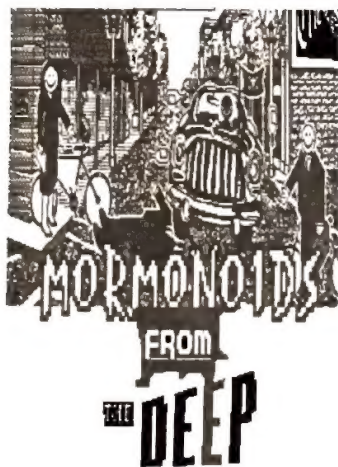
Mormonoids From The Deep
..by Smurfs In Hell
$9⁹⁵ + $0⁷⁵ ship
PLAY-03

A 2 disk set for one of the best adventure games on the Mac, depending on your tastes: you have a .45, a nuclear detonator, a rapidly waning collection of beers as lifeblood and you're stuck in a small, sociopathic Mormon town in northern Utah. What do you do next?

Sexotica
..by Dragon's Eye Productions
$39⁰⁰ + $0⁷⁵ ship
PLAY-06

Adults only! Sexotica #1 is the first in a series of erotic electronic literature (DOS) from Dragon's Eye. Illustrated with amazing amounts of VGA color by 'Manda D. Original music scores play on most sound cards (optional). Sales lit sez: *"Not merely 'erotic' but passionate, graphic stuff, arousing both to women and men. We mean it! We've really put the 'personal' into 'personal computing'."* 2.5 Mb on disk.

Note-A-Bennie: Many of our games **are** in fact commonly available in shareware versions, but **these** versions are the full thang with extra goodies and gizmos available. And if a product is marked **"Adults Only!"** then you're ordered to include a fotocopy of your adult "proof-of-age" with your order in order to purchase your order in good order...

ink globs

Unshaved Truths #2
..by FringeWare Inc.
$5⁰⁰ + $1⁰⁰ ship
UNTR-02

Fictionoids, Essays & Reviews, Crazy Wisdom. Features: *Cyberstroika!* by jonl, *Diary of a Programmer* by C.A. Rumbaut, *The Good Law* by Wendy Wheeler, and many more.
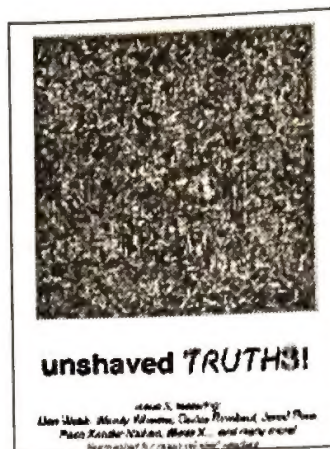
unshaved TRUTHS!

Unshaved Truths #3
..by FringeWare Inc.
$4⁰⁰ + $1⁰⁰ ship
UNTR-03

"Austin's foremost contribution to zine kulchur..." Gonzo fiction & high weirdness featuring: Don Webb, Wendy Wheeler, Peter Meyer, Carlos Rumbaut, Blade X, Jerod Pore, Robert Glenn, PXN and more! Edited by Jon Lebkowsky.
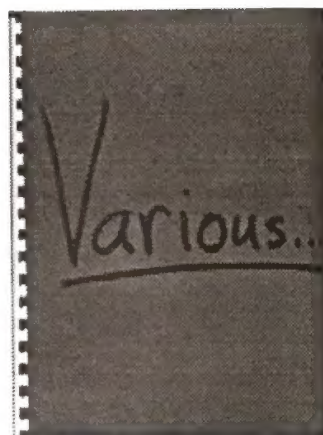
Various...
..by Richard Gardner
$16⁹⁵ + $3⁰⁰ ship
ZINE-03

Chaos conceptual art at a business reply rate: *"My friend Don and I get a lot of 'stuff' in the mail. We also manage to collect a lot of 'things' in our travels. All those 'objects' that are 8.5 by 11 inches end up in one of these here books."* It's rather bizarre, but even the critics who pick up this book tend to sit down and read it cover-to-cover for at least a half hour: *"The most interesting book on your coffee table or in your reception room..."*
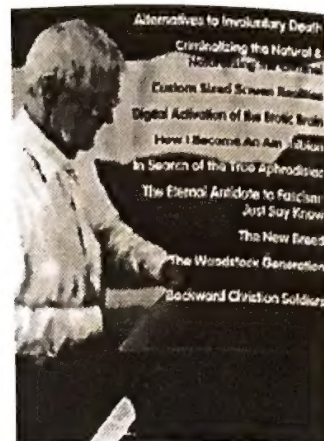
Timothy Leary's Greatest Hits
..by KnoWare
$15⁰⁰ + $0⁷⁵ ship
ZINE-04

Signed, limited edition of monographs including: *Alternatives to Involuntary Death*, *Criminalizing the Natural & Naturalizing the Criminal*, *How I Became An Amphibian*, *The Eternal Antidote to Facism: Just Say Know*, and more!

What Next?

mission statement

Neotribalism in the Global Village... FringeWare, Inc. (FWI) is a commercial enterprise dedicated to community development around a fringe marketplace where the edges of diverse alternative cultures intersect. We feel that the market is the core of any community, and sick markets mean sick communities... just look around.

FringeWare acknowledges the essential importance of trade, but our *mission* is to create a context for E. F. Schumacher's "Economics as if People Mattered."

What's in the Fringe Market? We focus on publications, events, and products that we find interesting, fun, and enlightening... we engage in the following business activities:

* Publishing printed and electronic periodicals, including *Fringe Ware Review* (ISSN 1069-5656) and *Unshaved Truths*.

* Operating a retail outlet and a mail order service, selling *street tech, software, gizmos, DIY supplies, wearable subversive memes*, etc. A retail outlet is located in our local bookstore, Europa Books, 2406 Guadalupe, Austin, TX. Our mail order address is:

  FringeWare Inc.
  PO Box 49921
  Austin, Texas 78765-9921 USA
  +1 512 477-1366

* Hosting an *Internet* mailing list for information from/about the cultural and technological fringes and providing an automated list server for FWI archives.

* Organizing events in cooperation with other *New Edge* firms and organizations.

We're learning that people can survive quite nicely without huge corporations, huge governments, and huge dogmas pushing their lives. So here's the FringeWare alternative:

Start your own corporation. Trade with other like-minded people throughout the Global Village. Encourage innovation and promote entrepreneurship. Promote fair, cooperative business practices. Emphasize products that facilitate creativity, health, and play. Explore consciousness alternatives. Build community through advanced, available technologies, e.g. computer networks. Respect and consider the natural environment by promoting sustainable resource use. Have fun, be weird, and make what it takes to survive.

Welcome to the Fringes of art, technology, and society. From here innovation emerges, and here survival - through cooperation and use of the unexpected - *counts.*

Thanks!

Jon Lebkowsky
Paco Xander Nathan

FRiNGEWARE iNC.

TOP SECRET

THIS IS A COVER SHEET

FOR CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

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